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# COVID-19 Puts Our Social Contract to the Test

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By *Eliot Sorel*

The COVID-19 crisis is severely testing the social contract, the implicit agreement among members of a society to cooperate for social benefits by sacrificing some individual freedoms.

The global pandemic started in Wuhan, China, soon engulfed Iran, Europe, North America, and then rapidly spread to Africa, Australia, and will likely spread soon to Latin America, and the West Indies. The COVID pandemic is affecting health, economic, educational systems and the wellbeing of us all. This is a unique moment in human history. Our unequivocal interdependence and the imperative of urgent cooperation and solidarity, means that we must review and revise our social contracts — and make them transparent to all.

No single state in the United States can, by itself, defeat this pandemic. The United States can and must adopt lessons learned from South Korea, Singapore, and Hong Kong to contain and mitigate this deadly pandemic. There are also lessons to be learned from China.

We must mobilize all available and necessary public, private and philanthropic resources; state, federal, and military; the business and the faith communities; health systems, academic and research institutions; and public health experts. Integrated into a cohesive whole, these systems must work with a restored U.S. Pandemics Working Group of the National Security and Preparedness Council to enhance our emergency response to this unprecedented challenge. Decisive national leadership must identify and implement a clear, single minded, unified *National Plan*. Such a unified, national plan, clearly spelled out, well integrated, and appropriately resourced is essential to contain, mitigate, and defeat this virus and also to gradually restore our battered economy.

Given the cataclysmic economic and health consequences precipitated by this pandemic, we must also review, revise and update our social contracts at both national and global levels. We must strengthen both our health and economic systems and make their interdependence apparent, by making *Access to Care for all Americans* a high and urgent national policy priority not only during pandemics but on an ongoing basis — as do other developed nations.

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Public Health Covid 19



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