

March 17, 2020

President Donald Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

The Defense Production Act of 1950 (DPA) authorizes the president to strengthen domestic manufacturing capacity and supply in extraordinary circumstances, and to direct the production by private sector firms of critical manufactured goods to meet urgent national security needs. In 2009, Congress amended DPA to explicitly extend those authorities to support domestic preparedness and response to national emergencies, like the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

There are widespread reports of shortages in personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, diagnostic test kits, and other medical supplies that require medical professionals to ration existing supplies. The Department of Defense, in collaboration with Governors and appropriate federal agencies, should immediately undertake a national assessment of the supply and anticipated needs for PPE, ventilators, diagnostic test kits, and other needed medical supplies to support the use of its DPA authorities, as well as determining the potential use of the Defense Logistics Agency to support the rapid deployment of needed equipment, including from existing reserves. It is critical that we substantially and immediately bolster domestic testing capacity to identify cases and, accordingly, help slow the spread of COVID-19. In addition to meeting the acute and immediate needs of our health care system, we must also anticipate potential medium to long-term needs for ventilators, PPE, test kits, and other goods as the disease spreads in the coming months, including a potential second wave.

In each of our states and across the nation, we know how to make things, quickly and efficiently. But these decisions cannot be left solely to the market or to individual states. The federal government must lead in making sure our nation's industrial capability is harnessed to address this urgent need. We urge you to invoke DPA authorities immediately to respond to this pandemic and alleviate these stresses on our health care system.

Sincerely,

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Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

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Charles E. Schumer  
United States Senator

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Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

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Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator

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Tom Udall  
United States Senator

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Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

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Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator

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Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator

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Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

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Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

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Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator

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Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator

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Tim Kaine  
United States Senator

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Christopher Murphy  
United States Senator

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Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

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Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

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Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

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Brian Schatz  
United States Senator

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Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator

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Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator

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Doug Jones  
United States Senator

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Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator

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Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

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Jack Reed  
United States Senator

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Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator

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Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator

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Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

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Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

CC: The Honorable Alex Azar, Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Mark Esper, Secretary of Defense  
Robert Kadlec, MD, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response