

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 22, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader, House of Representatives
United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy,

As we continue our work to respond to the Coronavirus pandemic, it is critical we ensure our healthcare workers, first responders, and those on the frontline have the necessary personal protective equipment (PPE) to protect the public health.

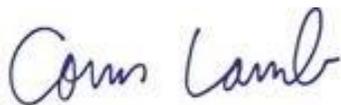
We fully support and encourage the full implementation of the Defense Production Act in order to address this critical healthcare equipment deficiency. But already our local health organizations, first responders, and county and state governments face shortages of this equipment, and they need to place orders now. There is no time to waste.

In our districts, it is clear that local funds are limited, and would quickly be drained if our local governments bought this equipment today in the amount that this crisis demands. Yet the need for PPE is not going away, and large orders today will likely save lives and taxpayer money in the near term, compared with smaller, piecemeal efforts limited by the constraints of local funding.

The federal government can fix this immediately. Because local institutions are meeting the real-time need by placing orders now, we propose and urge the creation of a direct reimbursement program for state and local governments, public safety agencies, volunteer fire and EMS departments, healthcare organizations, and affiliated entities that purchase PPE for this public health crisis. These entities need to be able to approach manufacturers of this critical equipment directly, with the full confidence that they would be backed by the federal government in these purchases. While the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) has existing reimbursement programs, the requirements are insufficient to meet demand in real time. A new federal reimbursement program should involve minimal certification requirements due to the urgency of the situation.

These goods are durable but cannot be produced overnight. We need to stay ahead of the problem, and protect the heroes who are already being exposed to the virus everyday without enough protection. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Conor Lamb
Member of Congress



Brian Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Jason Crow
Member of Congress

Max Rose
Member of Congress

Jared Golden
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress

Elaine G. Luria
Member of Congress

Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress

Guy Reschenthaler
Member of Congress

Madeleine Dean
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Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Mike Doyle
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Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.
Member of Congress

Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress

Joe Cunningham
Member of Congress

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress