

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Robert Lighthizer
U.S. Trade Representative
Office of the U.S. Trade Representative
600 17th Street NW
Washington, DC 20508

The Honorable Terry E. Branstad
U.S. Ambassador to China
U.S. Embassy Beijing
55 Anjialou Rd, Chaoyang District
Beijing, China 100600

Dear Ambassador Lighthizer and Ambassador Branstad:

We write to request that you immediately suspend all tariffs placed on all imports of medical supplies and equipment, including personal protective equipment under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 for the duration of the rapidly developing Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

The U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) recognized that tariffs on medical supplies and equipment were inappropriate when it announced on March 20 it would open a 3-month comment period for members of the public, businesses, and government agencies “to submit comments if they believe further modifications to the (Section) 301 tariffs may be necessary.”

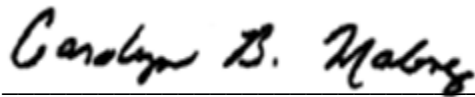
However, we’re asking for an immediate suspension of these tariffs because we cannot afford to wait any longer. On the day the comment period was announced, there were 15,490 total cases and 201 total deaths in the United States from the coronavirus. Today, there are 209,071 total cases and 4,633 total deaths. In New York, the epicenter of the outbreak in the U.S., hospitals and healthcare systems are nearing their breaking point as the number of new cases continues to exponentially rise.

As the outbreak continues, hospitals, doctors, health care providers, and emergency management coordinators in our districts and across the nation have been sounding the alarm that their systems are being overwhelmed. Our entire healthcare infrastructure is experiencing shortages of medical supplies – like ventilators, gloves, hand sanitizer, and other essentials – and personal protective equipment (PPE) that are critical to fighting the outbreak.

While we continue to support American manufacturers and innovation, there simply are not enough medical supplies and PPE domestically to alleviate the burden on our healthcare system. The tariffs add substantially to costs and delays in obtaining life-saving equipment and supplies

to our healthcare providers who are in a life-and-death struggle. We can – and must – do more to enable those on the front lines to do their jobs effectively and without fear that they might become infected or spread the virus themselves. Accordingly, we urge all of you to immediately take steps to suspend all tariffs placed on medical supplies and equipment for the duration of this public health crisis.

Sincerely,



CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress



CINDY AXNE
Member of Congress

This letter is sent on behalf of the following signatories:

Grace F. Napolitano
Nydia M. Velázquez
Harley Rouda
Lizzie Fletcher
Danny Davis
Vicente Gonzalez
Donna E. Shalala
Steve Cohen
Sharice L. Davids
James P. McGovern
Ed Case
David Scott
Raúl M. Grijalva
Charlie Crist
Matthew Cartwright
Anna Eshoo
Bill Foster
Abigail D. Spanberger
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