

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
S-221, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
Majority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-107, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader Hoyer, Leader McConnell and Leader McCarthy:

We write to urge you to use every tool in your arsenal to ensure health care workers and first responders obtain the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to stay healthy and safe as they work on the frontlines of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Like our colleagues around the country, we are hearing about severe PPE supply shortages occurring before the expected peak of this outbreak in our districts in Houston, which is home to the largest medical complex in the world with more than 366,000 health care workers. We know that the magnitude of this shortage will have devastating impacts here and across the country. Doctors, nurses, EMTs, police officers, firefighters, and a variety of others responding to this crisis are imploring the government to provide the equipment they need to do their jobs – to save our lives. It is disgraceful that our frontline workers are being put at risk because the federal and state government are unable to respond quickly and effectively.

Texas has received a grossly inadequate share of PPE from the Strategic National Stockpile. While we have heard from Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) administrator Peter Gaynor that states can expect additional shipment in the coming days, there is still no clear answer from the Administration about how many will be shipped or even how many are left. This is basic supply chain management.

We ask that the next coronavirus legislation encourage the production and distribution of PPE in every way possible. We must use every tool we have available to ensure the use of the Defense Production Act (DPA). President Trump has stated that he is encouraging companies to manufacture supplies behind closed doors instead of using the powers of the DPA. But with the current crisis only estimated to get worse, this approach is neither smart nor sound. The American people need clear purchasing agreements with companies able to make the supplies we need to fight this virus. There is no time to waste.

As the number of COVID-19 cases continues to increase, we need to find new ways to incentivize the manufacturing of necessary equipment. Failure to do so will magnify the scope and complexity of this crisis. If we don't act now with urgency, we risk the safety of our medical and emergency personnel, and of all Americans if they become infected and are no longer able to provide medical care for others. We urge you to work with relevant committees to pursue all possible avenues, including tax incentives, to spur the development and deployment of these devices.

Sincerely,



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Sylvia Garcia
Member of Congress



Pete Olson
Member of Congress