

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 26, 2020

The Honorable Alex Azar  
Secretary of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

The President's Executive Order of March 18, 2020, designating the equipment needed to fight the spread of the COVID-19 virus as meeting the criteria set forth by the *Defense Production Act*, was an important step toward ensuring that our healthcare providers and first responders have the resources they need to keep our communities safe. Personal protective equipment (PPE), ventilators, and testing reagents are all in short supply, and increased production is desperately needed.

To that end, we write to urge you to utilize the authority delegated to you by the President under the *Defense Production Act* to ensure that sufficient equipment is being manufactured to keep our communities safe and halt the spread of COVID-19.

In our home state of New Jersey, the need is particularly acute. New Jersey has the second highest number of cases of COVID-19 in the country, and our supply of respirators, eye protection, face masks, and other protective gear is rapidly decreasing. In some regions of New Jersey, healthcare providers estimate that their supplies will run out in a matter of days based on current usage levels – usage which is predicted to dramatically increase in the coming days and weeks. Deepening the need, New Jersey has only received a fraction of the supplies it has requested from the Strategic National Stockpile.

Healthcare providers and first responders are our first and best line of defense against COVID-19. We cannot afford to risk running out of PPE; the lives of providers, responders, and the public depend on it.

We are immensely proud of New Jersey's healthcare providers and first responders, who have selflessly and tirelessly worked to contain and confront this pandemic. We have also been overwhelmed by the resilience of New Jersey companies, many of whom have offered to re-tool production lines to begin to manufacture PPE. Many others who already produce PPE are working around the clock to increase their output. They need support from the federal government, and the President's delegation under the *Defense Production Act* gives you the tools to provide it. We look forward to working with you to ensure New Jersey receives the protective equipment it needs.

Sincerely,

Mikie Sherrill  
Member of Congress

Robert Menendez  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

Frank Pallone  
Member of Congress

Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Jefferson Van Drew  
Member of Congress

Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress

Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

Andy Kim  
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

Christopher H. Smith  
Member of Congress