

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

4/22/2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, D.C.

Dear President Trump:

As Members of Congress who participated in the Opening Up America Again Congressional Group, we write to you requesting a defined federal strategy to dramatically increase the production, training, and availability of testing for COVID-19. As governors contemplate strategies on how best to open their respective states' economies, a strong federal response is necessary to massively increase the capacity, accuracy, and simplicity of our nation's testing infrastructure for this highly communicable and often asymptomatic virus. We would encourage the Administration to deploy a nation-wide testing strategy, which could provide millions of people with tests and prevent millions of additional infections and the spread of the virus.

Diagnostic testing is critical to local and state governments' decisions to lift, modify, or extend current stay-at-home orders. The data from testing helps policymakers and public health officials understand the severity of the virus in their communities and gives businesses confidence that they will not put their customers and employees at risk. If stay-at-home orders are prematurely lifted without a rapid and universal testing strategy, workers and consumers will be unable to safely leave their homes and contribute to our economic recovery.

As we enter the third month of this crisis, the promise of providing tests to anybody who wants one has not been fulfilled. Although testing capacity has increased, we are still woefully undertesting the general population with only one percent of the American population being tested since March 2020. Currently, the United States is testing approximately 130,000 to 160,000 people per day, far below the minimum of 500,000 tests per day needed to better understand the infectiousness of the virus.¹ Moreover, the supplies for the test kits and chemical reagents to process the samples are limited, and more trained medical staff and personal protective equipment (PPE) are needed to administer and analyze a greater number of tests.

¹ <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2020/04/were-testing-the-wrong-people/610234/>

A national effort to increase state, local, tribal, and territorial testing capacity is imperative before communities can reopen and people can return to work or school. If officials are given the necessary data and information to see and understand the virus, they will be able to responsibly relax social distancing measures, reopen their economies, and rightly save lives.

This national testing effort must be coordinated through a single office to organize state, local, tribal, and territorial efforts and to compel test manufacturers to dramatically increase the number of tests produced and supplementary materials secured. A comprehensive federal procurement effort is essential to manage the testing supply chain, mitigate existing bottlenecks, and ensure the accuracy and reliability of tests.

As Congress continues to work in a bipartisan way to address this crisis, we urge you to take the following steps:

- Develop a comprehensive, national testing strategy to test front line health care workers, workers in critical industries, asymptomatic individuals who may encounter many people, and people returning to the workplace
- Include that plan in any guidelines for reopening the economy
- Fully mobilize the Defense Production Act to procure all testing components including – but not limited to – test kits, swabs, and reagents

As our governors, public health officials, front line medical staff, first responders, and essential workers respond to this crisis on the ground, the federal government must lead the efforts to drastically increase testing for COVID-19. Your leadership and the knowledge gained from more testing will allow our nation to responsibly reopen our economy and proceed forward to prosperity. We look forward to your Administration's prompt response to our requests.

Sincerely,



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress

Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress

Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

Stephanie Murphy
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress