

President Donald J. Trump  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

April 9, 2020

Dear President Trump,

As organizations committed to ensuring and expanding health care access, we urge you to continue to invoke the authority provided by the Defense Production Act (DPA) and to engage in a more comprehensive, systems-wide application of the statute. This application is essential to create the centralized federal response necessary to respond effectively to this pandemic. A more complete application of the DPA would allow the federal government to coordinate the national response, provide industry with sufficient guidance and expectations, and enable states to serve their residents more nimbly in this ever-evolving public health landscape. There must be an increase in the domestic production of critical medical supplies and equipment, ensure distribution to locations most in need, and prevent price spikes.

As you read this letter, our nation's health care providers are on the frontlines fighting COVID-19—struggling to treat hundreds of thousands of patients and to save lives—and too many are doing it without the medically necessary equipment and tools they require to properly respond to the needs of their patients. These shortages are forcing professionals to compromise the care they provide and to sacrifice their own health and safety. Without the proper equipment or supplies, providers are already falling ill, and we fear patients will die needlessly. This is the current reality, but it does not have to be the future.

The DPA grants the government broad authority to influence domestic industry in the interest of the national defense or in a public health crisis. This law recognizes that our country will face moments in history that require extraordinary government intervention for our survival—when we must trust our leaders to perform the jobs to which they have been elected. These moments are rare, but pivotal. We are at this juncture today.

As the global pandemic wears on, vulnerable populations including people of color; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people; some people living with HIV; older adults; and people with disabilities are at even greater risk of falling ill.

The supplies from the strategic stockpile and other federal resources are nearing depletion, according to Department of Homeland Security officials. Projections have already suggested that there will be a shortage of ventilators in the hundreds of thousands. Clinicians are already forced to engage in experimental and untested methods to stretch scarce resources to more patients, including splitting one ventilator between two patients. This ingenuity is inspirational, but it is maddening this is necessary as we live in one of the wealthiest nations in the world. In the absence of intervention, these same clinicians will be forced to make painful choices in

delivery of care that run counter to every day of medical training they have received up to this point.

As the New York Times reported on April 1, the U.S. government has used DPA authorities more than 300,000 times per year to prioritize federal acquisition of necessary materials and equipment. While less frequently utilized, the DPA authority to organize distribution is a critical tool that should not remain unused.

We urge you to exercise the authority granted by the DPA to work with companies to increase the manufacture of the materials needed and to ensure that they arrive at the hospitals and other critical users like public safety agencies most desperate for resources. Given the nature of the virus and the growing need, waiting is not an option. It is projected that hospitalizations will begin to peak in the coming weeks, and production of equipment is not instantaneous. We urge you to take the steps within your power to safeguard the supply chain distribution as state and health care providers are forced to unnecessarily compete for scarce equipment and supplies.

Without immediate and aggressive action today, millions more Americans will become sick and hundreds of thousands will die. Please do not dither any longer and use the full authority Congress has provided under the DPA. Our country cannot wait another day.

Sincerely,

Human Rights Campaign  
ADAP Advocacy Association  
African American Health Alliance  
AIDS Alliance for Women, Infants, Children, Youth & Families  
AIDS United  
American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation  
American Association of People with Disabilities  
American Association on Health and Disability  
American Federation of Teachers (AFT)  
American Music Therapy Association  
American Physical Therapy Association  
APLA Health  
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations  
Athlete Ally  
AVAC  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Cascade AIDS Project  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for Public Representation  
Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
CommunicationFIRST  
Community Access National Network  
Community Education Group  
Congregation of Our Lady of the Good Shepherd, U.S. Provinces

Disability Rights Education & Defense Fund  
Easterseals  
Equality California  
Family Equality  
FORGE, Inc.  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
GLSEN  
Hispanic Federation  
HIV Medicine Association  
Howard Brown Health  
Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA)  
Jewish Council for Public Affairs  
Justice in Aging  
Lakeshore Foundation  
Latino Commission on AIDS  
League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC)  
Matthew Shepard Foundation  
Mazzoni Center  
Movement Advancement Project  
NAACP  
National Advocacy Center of the Sisters of the Good Shepherd  
National Association of Councils on Developmental Disabilities  
National Association of School Nurses  
National Center for Learning Disabilities  
National Center for Transgender Equality  
National Coalition of STD Directors  
National Council on Independent Living  
National Disability Rights Network  
National Employment Law Project  
National Health Law Program  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Health Network  
National Women's Law Center  
New Jersey Association of Mental Health and Addiction Agencies, Inc.  
Not Dead Yet  
PFLAG National  
Power to Decide  
Prevention Access Campaign  
Ryan White Medical Providers Coalition  
Silver State Equality-Nevada  
Southern AIDS Coalition  
Tash  
The AIDS Institute  
The Arc of the United States  
the Forum for Youth Investment  
Treatment Action Group  
True Colors United  
Union for Reform Judaism  
Whitman-Walker Health