

Friday, April 3, 2020

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

Dear Mr. President:

From serving our country in combat to mining the coal that powered the industrial revolution, the people of West Virginia have always done whatever their country asked of them, and that is exactly what we are doing today to support our country's war against Coronavirus. When our state and local officials began to worry about the availability of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), tests, and testing materials, we didn't wait for the federal government, we sent surveys out to every healthcare provider, first responder, senior center, and local government in the state to see what they had on hand and what they thought they would need to meet their demands going forward. When we realized that there simply were not enough masks to meet our immediate needs and keep our healthcare workers safe, we didn't sit around and wait for someone to save us. We teamed up with our local United Way to recruit volunteers to make our own masks because we are West Virginia Strong.

While neither of these initiatives will singlehandedly turn the tide, they should remind all of us that America is more than a military super power, we are a manufacturing super power too. We invented the assembly line. We mined the coal that forged the steel that won two world wars. We have faced great challenges before, and we have risen to meet them. We can make the masks, the ventilators, the gloves, the gowns, and everything else we need to win this war, but we cannot succeed on our own. We cannot succeed as individual companies competing for raw materials. We cannot succeed as individual states competing for PPE. We all must be working together to increase production, improve procurement, and align the distribution of these essential materials to the places that need them most.

Mr. President, under the Defense Production Act (DPA), you have the authority during this pandemic to take the bold steps we need to begin to bring the manufacturing of critical materials like essential medicines and medical supplies, such as PPE, back home. I truly believe that if you take the lead, Congress will follow with bipartisan support. We cannot take care of ourselves or help those in need if we allow ourselves to continue to be held hostage by foreign supply chains in hostile countries that threaten the safety and security of our people. While I appreciate the steps you have taken to date, I firmly believe that you can do more, and, together, we must do more.

Abraham Lincoln said, “the better angels of our nature” can guide us during difficult times. During these trying times, we need all of our “better angels” to look after us and help us take care of each other. I am proud of the work I see every day being done by the people of West Virginia, and I know the same scenes are playing out in communities all across the country. The American people are ready and willing to go to work to make the critical materials we need to keep our country safe because we are America Strong.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Joe Manchin III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

U.S. Senator Joe Manchin III