

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 8, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write today to bring your attention to the serious impact that price gouging, as well as fraudulent and counterfeit goods, are having on our country's ability to treat patients and combat the spread of the COVID-19. We urge you to swiftly exercise the authorities at your disposal to improve distribution channels, prevent fraud, and better protect patients, health care providers, first responders, critical infrastructure workers, and all Americans.

Every day, profiteers and scam artists are taking advantage of desperate buyers and the unprecedented demand for personal protective equipment by charging obscene prices and selling counterfeit or fraudulent goods. Local and state governments, health care providers, first responders, and affected critical industries are scrambling to find new or additional sources of this equipment and, even worse, competing against each other for dwindling supplies.

When those buyers, struggling to replace their diminishing stocks, are forced to turn to international suppliers outside their accustomed channels and dubious third-party brokers, Americans are less safe. When health care providers pay outrageous, marked-up prices for personal protective equipment, only to discover that they purchased counterfeit items, those providers cannot safely and effectively do their jobs.

We implore you to exercise the strong manufacturing and supply channel oversight needed to keep profiteers and counterfeiters from taking advantage of vulnerable Americans. In addition to improving the integrity and oversight of personal protective equipment distribution to free the national supply chain of counterfeit items, we also urge you to protect Americans by directing national law enforcement and regulatory agencies to swiftly investigate allegations of counterfeiting and price-gouging.

Your executive orders of March 18 and March 23, 2020 delegated authority to a number of executive branch officials to take actions to prevent hoarding and to determine the “proper nationwide priorities and allocation of all health and medical resources, including controlling the distribution of such materials [...] in the civilian market.” The voluntary support from industry and manufacturers that your administration has largely relied upon thus far is an important initial step, and we are heartened by American businesses that are stepping up and working to meet the challenge. However, in this crisis, volunteerism can neither equal nor replace a comprehensive, efficient, and nationwide strategy designed to ensure that quality medical supplies are produced and effectively distributed to areas of critical need.

We, therefore, respectfully urge that you develop a response that strategically manufactures, allocates, and distributes medical supplies so as to prevent the introduction of counterfeit or fraudulent personal protective equipment into the supply chain, prevent profiteering and price gouging, and ensure that our local, state, and federal governments are all working together to fight the pandemic, rather than being forced into competing with one another for critical medical supplies.

Sincerely,



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator



Doug Jones
United States Senator



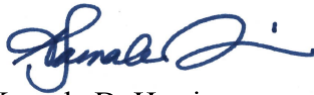
Angus S. King, Jr.
United States Senator

/s/ Chris Van Hollen

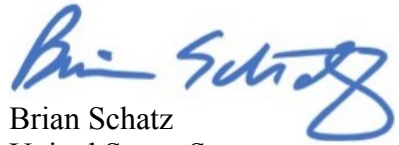
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris
United States Senator



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator



Chris Murphy
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



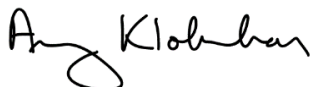
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

/s/ Jack Reed

Jack Reed
United States Senator



Gary C. Peters
United States Senator



Amy Klobuchar
United States Senators