

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pompeo
Secretary of State
United States Department of State
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Pompeo:

I write to encourage you to impose a temporary ban on all exports of coronavirus testing and diagnostic equipment, personal protective equipment, respirators, pharmaceutical supplies, and any other medical supplies necessary to American hospitals as they fight the ongoing coronavirus outbreak. As you know, Coronavirus has caused a sharp and overwhelming increase in both domestic and global demand for critical medical supplies. In these times, we must ensure that domestic production of certain medical equipment and supplies is focused on supporting the American hospitals that need it most.

In recent days, I have become aware of the struggle of some hospitals to obtain ordered medical supplies due to distributor policies that prioritize orders from other countries. Just today, I was informed by Northeast Georgia Health System that it faced uncertainty in the fulfillment of its recent purchase of high-speed testing equipment from a domestic company that is refusing any new customers because of a surge in orders from Europe. While I understand that distributors wish to fulfill their international orders, it is vital that we ensure American healthcare workers have the supplies and equipment they need to reduce spread of coronavirus and overcome this pandemic. As we have seen, even a few days can save lives and make a difference in our battle to control the coronavirus pandemic.

The private sector has been an incredible partner in our nationwide effort to combat the coronavirus pandemic. Its contribution during these times cannot be overstated. I do feel it necessary, however, that we provide clear guidance that all production of necessary medical supplies must first be sent to purchasers in the United States until domestic demand has been satisfied. This action could help reduce the spread of coronavirus and save numerous American lives.

The United States would not stand alone in taking such an action. Other countries including Germany, France, the United Kingdom, South Korea, and India have recently imposed similar bans on the export of supplies such as masks, respirators, and pharmaceutical products. In these unprecedented times, we must take decisive action on behalf of our communities that depend on us. Each day, our doctors, nurses, pharmacists, first responders, and others in the medical community are taking incredible risks and making sacrifices to stop the spread of coronavirus. We must do what we can to help them, and, right now, they need medical equipment.

I ask that the State Department consider a temporary ban on exports of equipment and supplies necessary to combatting the coronavirus until domestic demand has been met. With this action, we can take care of our men and women on the frontlines of this pandemic and those Americans at risk of contracting coronavirus. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact my office.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Doug Collins". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, prominent "D" and "C".

Doug Collins
Member of Congress