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April 2, 2021

Mr. Timothy Manning
COVID-19 Supply Chain Coordinator
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. Manning,

I write to you today regarding the urgent need to secure diversified and domestic manufacturing capacity for critical medical supplies, which must include small and medium manufacturers.

Our small- and medium-sized manufacturing businesses stand ready to assist the U.S. with increasing its stock of high-quality personal protective equipment (PPE) and testing and vaccine supplies, but have long been undermined in the market by foreign competitors. Many of these competitors in China proved unreliable during the pandemic, and prices for basic PPE items like N95 masks soared.ⁱ This has placed an enormous financial burden on states, public health departments, and health care providers. There are still widespread shortages of proper PPE, which are necessary to protect workers providing COVID-19 care, testing, and vaccinations.ⁱⁱ

Inspired by the experiences and perspectives of small businesses in the Kansas Third Congressional District, I introduced legislation to address small manufacturers' need for capital to build out their medical supply production. Last May I introduced the SUPPLIES Act, which would provide grants for small businesses who want to shift their production to manufacturing PPE and testing supplies. Importantly, this bill also has strong measures to boost American manufacturing and eliminate price gouging of these life-saving materials by requiring companies to prioritize domestic customers and to sell their product at a reasonable market price. It is critical that we have a stable, diversified, and domestic supply chain of medical supplies for our long-term national security and ability to respond to emergencies.

I was proud to vote for the American Rescue Plan Act, which included \$10 billion for domestic manufacturing of PPE and testing and vaccine supplies. I am further encouraged by President Biden's announcement that the administration will be utilizing the Defense Production Act (DPA) much more broadly to ensure our health care workers do not continue to face these shortages and to improve our national response to crises like COVID-19. I urge you to ensure that a portion of those domestic manufacturing funds are targeted towards small- and medium-

sized businesses. Increasing domestic production is vital to containing this pandemic and protecting jobs here in the United States. It is also in the best interest of our national security to strengthen our domestic manufacturing of these critical supplies, and that must include small- and medium-sized manufacturers as well.

Small businesses in the Kansas City metro have been eager to do their part during this public health emergency and beyond, and we should be giving them the resources needed to do so, especially as so many businesses are struggling to keep their doors open right now. Companies like Dentec Safety Specialists in Lenexa, Kansas, actually used to produce N95 masks, right here in the heartland. But they were pushed out of the market by foreign competitors with cheaper, and eventually lower-quality, product. They stand ready and willing to again produce N95 masks that will keep people safe during this pandemic, but they need capital in order to do so. Including small- and medium-sized manufacturers in DPA contracts will not only rapidly produce the supplies needed to help contain this public health crisis, but also help American businesses that have been hit the hardest during this economic crisis.

Lastly, thank you for your and your colleagues' efforts to quickly implement the absolutely critical provisions of the American Rescue Plan Act. The emergency relief contained in this law is urgently needed to address the ongoing public health and economic crises. I look forward to working with you to ensure that our small manufacturers are part of the solution to end these shortages.

My warmest regards,



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress

ⁱ CNN: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/04/16/politics/ppe-price-costs-rising-economy-personal-protective-equipment/index.html>

ⁱⁱ Washington Post: <https://www.washingtonpost.com/graphics/2020/local/news/n-95-shortage-covid/>