

U.S. Reps. Pocan, Blunt, Rochester, Crist: Introduce COVID-19 Emergency Production Act

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MADISON, WI—Representatives Mark Pocan (D-WI), Lisa Blunt Rochester (D-DE) and Charlie Crist (D-FL) will be introducing the COVID-19 Emergency Production Act tomorrow. The bill allows, by a vote of Congress, to force the President to use the Defense Production Act (DPA). Specifically, it requires him to use the DPA to designate PPE, all testing supplies and any future COVID-19 vaccine as critical material essential to the national defense. It would direct materials to be produced and distributed to states and territories based on their requests for supplies and in proportion to their populations.

The first COVID-19 case in America was reported on January 20, but four months later states and hospitals are still reporting shortages of critical supplies like personal protective equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 tests due to this administration's failure to act on a national level to combat this pandemic. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention note that we have tested less than 4% of our country's population and 13% of those we have tested have come back positive. The President has refused to use the full force of the Defense Production Act to combat this crisis on the grand scale it demands. We need to massively ramp up our testing and supply production to support the states and hospitals that have repeatedly requested them.

"The President's complete failure to respond to this crisis in a national manner has led to over 1.5 million cases and over 90,000 deaths in the country," **said Congressman Pocan.** "For months, states have begged for additional testing supplies and PPE and received crumbs from this administration in response. We cannot reopen states without expanding testing capacity nationwide—it's just that

simple. This president has refused to act as a leader and instead delights in states competing for scarce supplies. Our nation won't survive without national action."

"For the country to reopen and recover, we need a strong strategy that will ensure testing supplies and PPE are available to everyone that needs it," said **Congresswoman Blunt Rochester**. "But we must also put a plan in place to ensure we will be ready and able to produce and efficiently distribute a future vaccine. This bill will not only solve the real shortages experienced today, it will allow the President to use the Defense Production Act proactively to encourage the right investments and developments that so the issues with PPE and testing don't affect vaccine deployment. The health and safety of our communities are depending on us all to work together and get America back on track."

"We still don't have enough tests for everyone who wants one and our hospitals, health agencies, and first responders continue to compete with each other and the rest of the world for personal protective equipment. All 50 states are in some stage of reopening, and shortages will get worse if we see another spike," said **Congressman Crist**. "Everybody should have access to testing; every worker should have the PPE they need to do their jobs safely; and eventually, everyone should be able to get a vaccine. If the President won't use his authority under the Defense Production Act to get Americans what we need to beat this virus, Congress must step in and require it."

See the full text of the bill [here](#).

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