

U.S. Sen. Baldwin: Leads colleagues in urging USTR to support American PPE production by ending tariff exclusions for PPE from China

Posted on Thursday, Oct 21, 2021

>> **WisPolitics is now on the State Affairs network. Get custom keyword notifications, bill tracking and all WisPolitics content. [Get the app or access via desktop.](#)**

Washington, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senators Tammy Baldwin (D-WI) and Sherrod Brown (D-OH) wrote to United States Trade Representative (USTR) Katherine Tai, requesting that 301 penalty duties be assessed to all imported finished state personal protective equipment (PPE) and key raw material inputs, including single-use N95 and KN95 masks, reusable and surgical masks, and surgical gowns. A 2018 investigation under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 found that the Chinese government’s anti-competitive trade practices restrict U.S. commerce. Subsequently, the U.S. imposed duties on goods from China, with an exclusion process awarded on a case by case basis. In March 2020, the Trump administration provided exclusions to the tariffs imposed for medical products.

“Rather than providing relief to Chinese-made products, we should invest in and support our domestic manufacturers,” **wrote the senators.**

“During the early stages of the pandemic, workers in a wide array of states – including Ohio, Vermont, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, New York, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Maine – spent weeks working to retool their facilities to produce millions of tons of material for PPE to protect our frontline healthcare workers on the job,” **the senators continued.** “Our domestic manufacturers’ commitment, and the investments of their employees, must not be undermined by maintaining inappropriate tariff exemptions.

At the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Chinese government hoarded PPE,

contributing to global PPE shortages, and refused to export it, leaving American supply chains and essential workers – especially healthcare workers – at the whim of the Chinese Communist Party’s export controls during a global health crisis.

The letter sheds light on how American companies saved lives by retooling their production facilities to meet the demand for these life-saving products in partnership with workers and their unions, only to be left at the whim of China’s export controls by keeping these tariff exclusions in place.

The letter was also signed by U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Bob Casey (D-PA), Tina Smith (D-MN), Chris Murphy (D-CT), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Kirsten Gillibrand (D-NY), Bernard Sanders (I-VT), Jack Reed (D-RI), and Ed Markey (D-MA).

The letter can be found [here](#)