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United States Senate

March 15, 2021

COMMITTEES:
RANKING MEMBER
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APPROPRIATIONS

COMMERCE, SCIENCE,
AND TRANSPORTATION

INDIAN AFFAIRS

BANKING, HOUSING,
AND URBAN AFFAIRS

HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President,

As the nation was in the midst of an unprecedented public health emergency last spring, Kansans scaled up manufacturing of viral collection products necessary for widespread COVID-19 testing. Viral transport media manufacturing in Kansas is the perfect example of our nation taking action to invest in the United States' supply chain resiliency, which the pandemic demonstrated required improvements. However, despite the broad and bipartisan acknowledgement the United States must focus on building up our domestic supply chain, I understand that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is cutting back on purchasing viral transport media after moving last year to ensure its availability. The United States must learn from our past mistakes and make sure we have domestic suppliers of products critical to Americans' health.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted weaknesses in the United States' healthcare supply infrastructure – as Americans struggled to get PPE, viral collection and other products as global demand surged. Through emergency measures such as the Defense Production Act, which you have invoked, and private industry stepping in with large investments of their own, our reliable American workforce rose to the challenge to produce the critical products for pandemic response. By ensuring the investment in our domestic supply chain was organized at the beginning of the pandemic, we saved lives and demonstrated the government's commitment to domestic manufacturing. This decision to draw down viral transport media purchases loses focus on one of the biggest lessons of the pandemic: the need for domestic supply chain resiliency. We cannot lose sight of this goal and let our domestic capabilities slip away simply because the urgent need has lessened slightly.

When it comes to investing in domestic sources of critical products, the benefits far outweigh the costs, as you recognized when signing your Made in America executive order in January. Should we forget the lesson learned from just a year ago, Americans will pay the price for years to come as our supply chain returns to its pre-pandemic orientation. We ought to support American manufacturing capabilities in order to end our tenuous reliance on foreign suppliers. In doing so, we will also protect American livelihoods.

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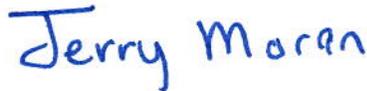
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In the United States of America, including in Kansas, we have the innovation, investment, and manpower necessary to meet immense manufacturing challenges. The skill of the American workforce to produce our own medical products has been proved over the past year. We cannot move backwards, which is where this decision would lead us. I strongly encourage you to renew the U.S. government's commitment to supporting American manufacturers, as the livelihoods of American workers and the health of the American economy now and in the future depends on strong investment in our domestic supply chain. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Jerry Moran

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