

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

November 24, 2020

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to once again convey the urgent need for federal resources in New Jersey to improve testing capacity. The coronavirus disease of 2019 (COVID-19) continues to reach record highs; case rates in November are surpassing even our highest rates from the spring.

On November 23, New Jersey reported 3,592 new COVID-19 cases and 11 new deaths. State-wide case totals are over 300,000 and confirmed deaths will soon surpass 15,000 people.

New Jersey's hospitals are also experiencing record admissions. On November 23, 2,785 hospital beds were filled with COVID-19 patients; 522 of those patients were in an Intensive Care Unit (ICU); and 265 of those in the ICU are currently breathing via a ventilator.

We commend New Jersey for taking swift action to address this latest surge. The state has more than 2,300 contact tracers working to help mitigate the spread of infection. Governor Murphy has also signed an Executive Order limiting indoor gatherings to 10 people, requiring masks indoors, issuing travel restrictions, and urging social distancing.

Despite the state's best efforts, the positivity rate for COVID-19 testing currently averages about 10 percent. As you know, experts suggest anything over a five percent positive testing rate requires urgent containment and mitigation efforts. However, containment and mitigation efforts rely on sufficient testing capacity to ensure that cases are being quickly identified and New Jersey is once again facing extended lines at testing locations and turn-around times for results becoming longer by the day. We are in agreement with medical and public health experts that rapid and robust testing is the key to driving down case rates and re-opening New Jersey's economy.

In April, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) opened two drive-through testing facilities in New Jersey. These drive-through testing sites were critical to expanding testing capacity throughout our state. FEMA closed these testing sites in July, despite public pressure to keep them open. With the rise in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, as well as increased demand for testing, we call on our federal partners to once again provide New Jersey with the resources to re-open these drive-through testing facilities to help contain the spread of this virus before it worsens.

With this assistance, the Administration can ensure that states like ours receive the resources necessary to expand testing and a return to normalcy. We appreciate your consideration of these requests.

Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Tom Malinowski
Member of Congress



Andy Kim
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress