



PRESS STATEMENT

INDUSTRY AND UNION COALITION RELEASES STATEMENT

May 24, 2021

WASHINGTON—A broad coalition of industry organizations and labor unions, representing a broad spectrum of manufacturers and workers who stepped up to make essential personal protective equipment (PPE) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, sent a letter today to Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) expressing strong support for the inclusion of robust domestic procurement policies for PPE in the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA) currently being considered by the Senate.

“Specifically, we urge you to ensure broad government coverage for domestic PPE procurement by extending rules for PPE procurement substantially similar to the Berry Amendment to the federal government’s largest buyers of these products, including the Departments of Homeland Security, Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs, and Defense,” the coalition states in the letter.

“We thank you for including such a provision in Section 4153 of the USICA, which is substantially similar to the bipartisan Make PPE in America Act (S.1306) introduced earlier this year by Senators [Gary] Peters and [Rob] Portman,” the coalition writes. “As you consider legislation to respond to the legacy of manufacturing and technology offshoring to China, provisions like Section 4153 are vital to reduce U.S. dependency on China for vital medical supplies.”

“Last spring when our national PPE crisis was on the nightly news showing workers wearing garbage bags as gowns and reusing N95 masks, our severe overreliance on China for PPE revealed the undeniable fact that the lack of U.S. production of PPE is a threat to our national security and the public health of the American people,” the letter states.

However, “despite PPE shortages and supply chain disruptions, American workers stepped in to fill an enormous void. As a result of its sweat and ingenuity, U.S. manufacturing produced over a billion critical PPE items such as face masks, isolation gowns, and testing kit swabs for health care and frontline workers, as well as the American people... For the first time in years, America makes PPE again,” the coalition adds.

“For this trend to continue, however, the coalition stresses that “the emergent U.S. PPE industry needs the purchasing certainty that long-term government contracts can provide.”

“We need a strong, vibrant, redundant wholly U.S. PPE supply chain to help protect us from the next public health crisis. We urge you to ensure that the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act extends domestic purchasing requirements for PPE to the four critical departments with the largest federal purchasing power for these products—DHS, HHS, VA, and DoD.”

See the coalition’s full letter [here](#).

The statement was signed by the following organizations:

- AFL-CIO
- Alliance for American Manufacturing
- American Apparel and Footwear Association
- American Iron and Steel Institute
- American Sheep Institute
- Coalition for a Prosperous America
- Georgia Association of Manufacturers
- INDA: Association of the Nonwoven Fabrics Industry
- Narrow Fabrics Institute
- National Council of Textile Organizations
- Parachute Industry Association
- Rhode Island Textile Innovation Network
- SEAMS: Association of the U.S. Sewn Products Industry
- Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
- Steel Manufacturers Association
- U.S. Industrial Fabrics Institute
- United States Footwear Manufacturers Association
- United Steelworkers
- Warrior Protection and Readiness Coalition
- Workers United

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NCTO is a Washington, DC-based trade association that represents domestic textile manufacturers.

- U.S. employment in the textile supply chain was 530,000 in 2020.
- The value of shipments for U.S. textiles and apparel was \$64.4 billion in 2020.
- U.S. exports of fiber, textiles and apparel were \$25.4 billion in 2020.
- Capital expenditures for textiles and apparel production totaled \$2.38 billion in 2019, the last year for which data is available.

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