

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 13, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden,

Thank you for your leadership to address the COVID-19 pandemic. We applaud your recent announcements to take new steps to help keep Americans safe from COVID-19, including the federal government's purchase of half a billion COVID-19 rapid test kits to help meet the demand for tests. In December, we sent you a letter respectfully encouraging your Administration to steer additional testing capacity to New York City to help protect people and communities from severe illness. We thank you for helping to set up additional testing sites across the City. We are writing again to respectfully ask that your Administration provide the necessary COVID-19 rapid test kits to help our city battle this latest surge in COVID-19 cases and provide guidance that ensures school communities are safe.

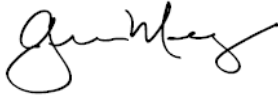
New York City represents more than half of New York State's record-breaking new daily positive cases of COVID-19. With the rapid spread of the virus comes increased demand for COVID-19 testing. At-home COVID-19 testing kits have also become scarce at pharmacies, forcing New Yorkers to wait in long lines at testing sites.

The need for COVID-19 rapid test kits in New York City is palpable. Rapid COVID-19 tests provide New Yorkers not only with the ability to test in the comfort of their own home, but also help alleviate the hours-long lines we have seen at brick and mortar and mobile testing sites since late December. Without COVID-19 rapid test kits, New York City is not able to sustain its current efforts to limit the spread of the virus. We further emphasize the need to ensure at-home tests are made available free of charge to remove barriers that may otherwise prevent people from receiving the care they need and keeping our communities healthy and safe.

Additionally, access to COVID-19 rapid test kits that are accompanied with translations and support to promote fidelity of implementation to help ensure New York City can continue to keep schools open, safely. For our school communities to be healthy and safe for everyone, we further encourage your administration to issue guidance that complements rapid test kits such that when a student tests positive for COVID-19, it is always communicated to the school and that the student quarantine at home. At this time, testing of NYC students is limited and we need to make every effort to prioritize and protect the health and well-being of everyone who is a part of our school communities. We appreciate your Administration's commitment to increase the number of COVID-19 rapid test kits available to schools by 10 million per month. Building on your successes in the fight against the virus, New York City must have access to a sufficient number of COVID-19 rapid tests to meet the demands of the Omicron surge.

Thank you again for your leadership to address the COVID-19 pandemic. We look forward to continuing to work with you to defeat this virus.


Sincerely,



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
Member of Congress



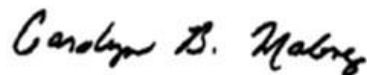
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
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Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Miguel Cardona, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Education
The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
The Honorable Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention