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Grace Meng
Congress of the United States
Sixth District, New York

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April 17, 2020

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

Dear Mr. President:

I write to you because of the dire situation inside long term care facilities across the United States and especially in Queens, NY, where the highest number of COVID-19 deaths in nursing homes have occurred. New York is the epicenter of the COVID-19 pandemic with over 224,000 confirmed cases, accounting for one-third of confirmed cases in the entire country. I thank you for making the arrangements to have the Jacob K. Javits Convention Center converted to treat COVID-19 patients and for deploying USNS Comfort and our servicemembers to our great city. As the hardest hit area, I implore you to use any means possible within your authority to expeditiously manufacture COVID-19 tests and prioritize New York in receiving these tests, which would help address the testing needs at our long term care facilities where the most vulnerable population resides.

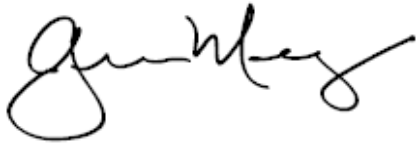
Long term care facilities have been struck with its own outbreak of unfortunate COVID-19 deaths as they operate beyond their normal capacity with insufficient staffing and PPE to protect health care personnel and residents. Furthermore, long term care facilities cannot test everyone who presents COVID-19 symptoms. These challenges compounded with insufficient testing capabilities have made it difficult to isolate suspected COVID-19 cases, consequently, making our fight against this highly contagious and invisible enemy even harder.

New York State officials recently instituted a requirement for long term care facilities to inform family members of residents within 24 hours of any COVID-19 infections or deaths. I urge you to recommend this requirement nationally. Doing so would allow families to make the necessary preparations or arrangements so they may save their loved ones. Ultimately, I hope that our tragedy in Queens can be used to warn the entire nation of the importance in securing long term care facilities.

It is of utmost importance that we ensure future allocations of emergency funding are prioritized for long term care facilities. We also need sufficient impact data on COVID-19 cases in these facilities so that we may contain and mitigate the spread of this virus. Furthermore, limited COVID-19 testing has a devastating ripple effect that will certainly revert any containment

attempts. Therefore, I ask you to increase our testing capabilities by using the Defense Production Act or any means possible within your authority, and prioritize nursing homes for tests as they become available before more of our elderly population succumbs to COVID-19 complications.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Grace Meng', with a stylized, cursive script.

Grace Meng
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Michael Pence, Vice President, Chair, White House Coronavirus Task Force
The Honorable Alex M. Azar, Secretary, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services