

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Office of Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

As Members of Congress from Palm Beach County, we have heard from our local doctors, nurses, police, and fire fighters fearful for the safety of the public and their fellow front-line workers because of the lack of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and testing for COVID-19.

Palm Beach County has a population of almost 1.5 million people, nearly a quarter of whom are over the age of 65. Yet, due to the lack of test kits and test sites, only 737 tests have been administered with 101 positive cases. This is especially concerning due to the rise of cases in our neighboring Dade and Broward Counties and our large senior population. We have already heard of fire fighters in self-isolation due to on-the-job exposure to the virus. Some police are being sent far away for COVID-19 testing only to be sent home after waiting hours without a test.

Given the rapid transmission of the virus nationally – and knowing that the vast majority of carriers are asymptomatic – it is clear the disease is far more widespread than the numbers indicate. This lack of available testing data may lead people to ignore public health precautions such as social distancing and self-isolation.

With public health professionals projecting the rapid spread of the disease, we face the potential for our health system to be overwhelmed while our local medical professionals and first responders lack access to the most basic PPE such as gowns, gloves, eye shields, and N-95 masks.

We must ensure that non-essential businesses stay closed, our citizens stay home if they can, and our front-line healthcare workers and first-responders get the tools and protection they need to go to war against this disease.

We recognize you have declared a state of emergency due to the threat of COVID-19. With that said, we respectfully request:

1. That on behalf of the citizens of Florida you make it clear to President Trump that we do not have the test kits and PPE needed to keep Floridians safe, and urge him to take every legal action necessary to get the required test kits and PPE to our state;
2. That you take all necessary legal action to get adequate test kits and PPE to Palm Beach County, including the deployment of drive through and other testing sites; and
3. That you provide us with an update on what actions you intend to take to increase access to testing, provide needed PPE, and ensure the public take precautions to slow the spread of this disease.

Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress