

**United States Senate**  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

February 22, 2021

Jeffrey Zients  
Counselor to the President  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. Zients,

Companies across our country have stepped up to support our critical supply needs in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes many small manufacturers that retrofitted their facilities to make nose strips in medical face shields or plastic barriers to keep store clerks safe, testing companies that developed at-home COVID-19 detection kits, and biomedical researchers undertaking clinical studies to help aid our response. Every company I have met in Connecticut is eager to support our public health and economic recovery in every way possible. At the same time, many Connecticut manufacturers have expressed mounting frustration to navigating the bureaucratic procedures and hurdles to receive contracts, awards, and other agreements with the federal government to bolster the domestic supply chain. I respectfully request that the COVID-19 Taskforce increase engagement with small and mid-sized companies that are ready and willing to support our country's COVID-19 response and recovery.

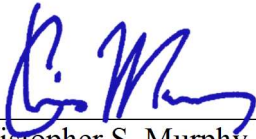
The innovative work happening in small and medium-sized companies could well have the key that unlocks a treatment or a vaccine, helps to rapidly expand testing, or reduces spread of the virus. I have visited with many companies across manufacturing, health information technology, laboratory test development, and chemical engineering. Most of these manufacturers have only received a confirmation of receipt to their federal government outreach over the past year despite constant outreach. This is a paramount concern for all Americans that excellent manufactures in Connecticut and across the country have been shut out of the process and have critical production capability and supplies sitting unutilized.

With the science-driven, transparent approach of the Biden Administration to addressing the pandemic, we have new opportunities to include new private-sector partners to aid our nation's response. I hope the COVID-19 Taskforce will increase engagement with and outreach to small and medium-sized businesses through the Defense Production Act, the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA), the National Institutes of Health's Rapid Acceleration of Diagnostics (RADx), and other related programs that are focused on improving our supply chain for testing, personal protective equipment, and other medical supplies. These companies are a critical part our response and should not be left on the sidelines.

Finally, should you need any help connecting with small and medium-sized Connecticut businesses to learn firsthand about their experiences and hear their suggestions, I would be more than happy to assist you.

Thank you for your continued service to our nation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic and I look forward to working with you to help prioritize integration of the small businesses in our supply chain.

Sincerely,



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Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator