

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2020

The Honorable Mike Pence
Vice President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20050

Dear Mr. Vice President:

Thank you for your leadership and service to our country during this challenging health crisis. We write to you today to request that you take all necessary action to ensure adequate reagent supply availability, particularly as the COVID-19 infection rate is beginning to rise in states like Arkansas and more testing is necessary.

Recently, we were advised that a reference lab used by many Arkansas hospitals has cancelled their testing contracts due to a lack of sufficient testing reagents. Likewise, Arkansas hospitals have had their internal testing capacity limited to ten percent of their machines' and staff's ability to run tests due to a lack of reagents.

With the cancellation of the aforementioned testing contracts, Arkansas has reached a critical point. The state now is having to make the difficult decision of whether to adhere to its requirement for COVID-19 tests 48 hours before elective procedures or eliminate this testing requirement. Adhering to the 48-hour rule likely will lead to the cancellation of most elective procedures, while eliminating it will mean that medical professionals must assume that the patient has COVID-19 causing the medical professionals to utilize PPE at a rate faster than necessary. Either option puts Arkansans at risk.

As our nation has quickly built and accelerated our testing capacity, the transformation of our testing infrastructure has been tremendously successful thanks to the hard work of the administration and the nation's governors and public health departments. Now, our testing infrastructure is approaching the point where our ability to perform tests outpaces the supply of the necessary testing reagents. Therefore, we request that you take the necessary action to bolster the nation's supply of testing reagents to ensure that these strides in testing can continue.

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We appreciate all of your efforts to keep Arkansans and Americans safe and healthy throughout this pandemic. Thank you for your consideration of this request and please let us know if you require any additional resources from Congress to address this matter.

Sincerely,



John Boozman
U.S. Senator



Tom Cotton
U.S. Senator



Rick Crawford
Member of Congress



French Hill
Member of Congress



Bruce Westerman
Member of Congress



Steve Womack
Member of Congress