



November 30, 2020

Support the Stop PPE Taxes Act, S. 4497

On behalf of FreedomWorks' activist community, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to cosponsor the Stop PPE Taxes Act, S. 4497, introduced by Sen. Pat Toomey (R-Pa.). This legislation would temporarily remove import duties and tariffs from personal protective equipment (PPE) being used to combat the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response to a bipartisan request for information from Congress, the International Trade Commission (ITC) [compiled a report](#) in May detailing those products which are needed for the COVID-19 response and their related tariffs and trade information. This report confirmed what many in Congress had already feared; the vast majority of imported PPE is subject to significant tariffs and import duties. While we have managed to solve the supply chain issues that plagued the early days of the pandemic, Americans are still being forced to pay more for essential products because of these tariffs and import duties.

For example, N95 masks -- the primary respirator recommended by both the Centers for Disease Control and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration -- have a 7.5 percent tariff under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974, as well as a 7 percent most favored nation tariff. Other PPE, like plastic aprons, are subject to duties of up to 30 percent, while many disinfectants and sterilization products have duties of up to 28.7 percent. To make matters worse, of the over 55 essential products that are subject to 301 tariffs, half have not been granted any waiver and 15 products have been granted only a partial exemption.

As with all international trade restrictions, these tariffs and import duties hurt Americans far more than the country they are targeted at. This is particularly the case with Chinese products that make up the bulk of our essential PPE which are subject to steep 301 tariffs. Now more than ever, our federal government should be taking steps to remove trade barriers in order to ensure our healthcare professionals have access to all the protective equipment they require at market rates.

Towards this end, the Stop PPE Taxes Act would temporarily suspend tariffs under Section 301 of the Trade Act of 1974 and Section 232 of the Trade Expansion Act of 1962 on all essential products included in ITC's report through 2022. It would also temporarily suspend duties imposed under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act.

During these difficult times, Congress should be doing everything in their power to reduce barriers and decrease costs for PPE. S. 4497 is common sense legislation to help protect our medical professionals as they combat this unprecedented pandemic. Furthermore, Sen. Toomey's proposal would better enable schools, businesses, and individuals to afford the protective equipment they need to stay safe. For these reasons, I urge you to contact your senators and ask them to cosponsor the Stop PPE Taxes Act, S. 4497.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Brandon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Adam Brandon
President, FreedomWorks