

COVID-19 IS KILLING BLACK PEOPLE. PRESIDENT TRUMP, HELP US!

Covid-19 is killing us. Racism is our pre-existing condition. This is not hyperbole. We have a crisis within a crisis. This moment, our bodies carry the vestiges of America's hateful past. The intergenerational trauma of slavery, hate, murder and institutional injustice is carried in our DNA. Over 400 years of exploitation and violence have literally made us sick. Food deserts, expensive healthcare, pollution, and endless microaggressions are all traumas of the mind and body — and they are killing us. Nationally, Blacks are dying from Covid-19 at a rate 3 to 4 times higher than whites.

Today, Black people have higher incidences of hypertension, diabetes, heart disease, cancer, infant mortality, and strokes. Trauma after trauma, generation after generation, poverty, oppression, and violence sit in our bodies as disease.

Mr. President, right now, this minute, we need you to LEAD. I grew up in a family business. I'm no expert on pandemics, but I see desperation and pain spreading in our communities. We need decisive and urgent action.

There are federal actions that only you can take. Please form an urgent response team to target Black, Latinx, and Indigenous populations. This team must include the best and brightest from communities of color with expertise in: infectious disease and research; targeted marketing and communications; general expertise in hospital and institutional supply chains; retail supply chains and manufacturing operations; and, state and county healthcare coordinators. The team must give weekly updates on C-SPAN with FACTS from each discipline. Journalists from affected counties, neighborhoods, and reservations must have virtual access to these press conferences.

We need mass quantities of PPE and cleaning products. In some cases, we are paying \$4 EACH for disposable surgical face masks and \$9 for a 16-ounce bottle of hand sanitizer *if* we can find them. CDC-recommended masks, sanitizer, disinfectant cleaners, and wipes are scarce and expensive. Our communities already spend more on basic household items as a percentage of income. How can we get back to work *and* protect our families? Must we choose between our livelihoods and our lives? Once schools reopen, there will be even more demand for virus-related supplies. How can families afford to keep children safe? This is America?

Use the Defense Production Act (DPA) to get these products to our shelves urgently — within weeks, not months — at PRE-PANDEMIC PRICES. Flood the marketplace with products to save lives and end the price gouging.

People of color are primarily the ones disinfecting our public spaces, cleaning hospital rooms and common areas, providing daily personal care for the sick, driving the buses, working the cash registers, harvesting and cooking our food, delivering packages, and so much more. Businesses are already passing on their costs of pandemic-related overhead. Small businesses can't carry these additional expenses unless they increase prices. We are paying more for food and household basics. Higher prices pour salt in the wounds of disadvantaged communities.

PPE, syringes, swabs, vials, gloves, sterile wipes, and other critical items need to be produced under the DPA now! WE STILL DON'T have enough PPE. It is delusional to think demand has lessened. It's not lower; we are rationing our supplies because *we have to*. And we're compromising our healthcare workers and hospital staff in the process. Proper medical standards for PPE usage must be reinstated. Public and private healthcare systems are paying more for supplies and passing the costs on to us!

DPA must control prices on medical and household virus-related goods. PRE-PANDEMIC PRICES must be held in check at each stage of production, distribution, and point of sale. The DPA producers must proportionally include our communities for employment opportunities and as vendor partners.

This is not the time for corporate America to be greedy.

We need MANY, MANY MORE TESTS for those disproportionately affected! Let me define what I mean by testing: ACCURATE with RAPID RESULTS (within hours, not days); adequate supplies to rapidly process tests; and, ACCESSIBLE and free weekly testing for frontline and essential workers to be tested in their zip code.

Please don't keep telling us that testing is not necessary for everyone; only those with symptoms. Don't tell us "we can't test 300 million people" and that you are tracking cases to identify hot spots. Cases are PEOPLE. We are not numbers to be "tracked" by some lag indicator. People who live in densely populated cities or work the front lines need frequent testing. PERIOD. Those with positive or undetermined results need temporary housing to self-isolate. Use federal or military housing. Allocate money to target states to pay for all test-related expenses.

We need a specific, detailed plan for every type of congregate housing, their residents, staff, and vendors. This includes prisons, jails, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, shelters, and other places. It is long overdue. We need a PLAN NOW . . . today! Families are at risk.

We need your leadership. If you allow this virus to hollow out essential workers and communities of color with more sickness and death, our economic recovery won't be a "V", it will be an "L" — and our morality will never recover.

**MR. PRESIDENT, PLEASE
FOR GOD'S SAKE . . . HELP US!**

Prayerfully,



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