

THE MASKS FOR ALL ACT of 2020

Senator Sanders's Masks for All Act of 2020 would require the federal government to use all available authorities, including the Defense Production Act, to eliminate all shortages of face masks, surgical masks, and N-95 respirators and distribute masks to the public as soon as possible. The legislation was recently announced in a joint [CNN op-ed](#) by Senator Sanders and Andy Slavitt, former Acting Administrator of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services under President Obama. Representatives Khanna, Trahan, and Watson Coleman will lead the legislation in the House.

Under the Masks for All Act, every person in the United States – including individuals who are experiencing homelessness or living in congregate settings such as prisons, shelters, college dorms and assisted living facilities – would receive a package of three high-quality, reusable face masks, free of charge. Individuals would be able to pick up additional masks at convenient community locations that are already providing essential services, such as post offices, pharmacies, schools, public transportation stations, and COVID-19 testing sites. Finally, the bill would provide needed surgical masks and N-95 respirators to all workers in health settings.

Recent data shows that the widespread use of face masks could prevent tens of thousands of deaths COVID-19 deaths, while other studies show universal mask wearing could save the U.S. economy [\\$1 trillion](#). At a time when the coronavirus pandemic has infected over [4.1 million](#) Americans and killed more than 145,000, Congress has a responsibility to ensure families and workers have the personal protective equipment (PPE) they need to stay safe. Additionally, as more than [half of U.S. states](#) are requiring wearing masks in public, our government must step up and provide the public with high quality masks. As [the American Medical Association](#) recently urged the Trump administration, the failure to address PPE shortages can cause lasting harm to vulnerable communities by cutting off access to care in underserved areas. This would worsen the already deadly racial and ethnic health disparities in our country – to date, majority black counties account for more than half of all COVID-19 cases and nearly [60 percent](#) of all COVID-19 deaths.

The Masks for All Act would also:

- Appropriate \$5 billion for domestic manufacturing, procurement, and mask distribution
- Require the federal government to procure masks at a reasonable price
- Deliver masks to households via the U.S. Postal Service
- Package masks with information on the importance of wearing and proper use of masks
- Require weekly progress reports to Congress on use of funds and actions undertaken to eliminate mask shortages

Senate Cosponsors: Bennet, Blumenthal, Booker, Gillibrand, Harris, Jones, Peters, Markey, Merkley, Smith, Van Hollen, Warren

Groups Endorsements: American Federation of Teachers (AFT), Association of Flight Attendants (AFA-CWA), the Arc of the United States, Democracy for America (DFA), Indivisible, League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC), Little Lobbyists, Make the Road, MoveOn, National Domestic Workers Alliance (NDWA), National Postal Mail Handlers Union (NPHMU), People's Action, Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP), Progressive Change Campaign Committee (PCCC), Public Citizen, Social Security Works, United We Dream, and Working Families Party (WFP).