



May 26, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader Schumer and Leader McConnell:

Thank you for your comprehensive approach to the U.S. Innovation and Competition Act (USICA), a significant step forward toward providing American manufacturers and employers with the necessary resources to compete in the evolving global marketplace. Following the past year and the coronavirus pandemic, it is abundantly clear that U.S. manufacturers and their domestic supply chains have been negatively impacted by years of offshoring to foreign nations, including our emerging near peer adversaries. There are myriad examples from the past year that demonstrate the negative impacts of these actions, especially as frontline personnel and first responders sought lifesaving personal protective equipment (PPE) items that were not immediately available due to our overreliance on foreign sources of these critical safety items.

As Congress considers opportunities to restore our domestic supply chains and support American manufacturers, there are several amendments under consideration designed to support this important objective. Notably, Sen. Shaheen, Sen. Hassan, Sen. Rounds, and Sen. Moran have introduced S.1009, the Homeland Procurement Reform (HOPR) Act to ensure that key components of the Department of Homeland Security can procure critical equipment developed and manufactured in the United States to execute their security, enforcement, and investigative missions. We have consistently encouraged Congress to identify opportunities to empower federal agency procurement officers to invest in American supply chains and provide high quality, innovative PPE and equipment produced in the United States. The HOPR Act establishes specific criteria that the Department of Homeland Security must meet when procuring certain uniform and PPE items.

As the Senate continues consideration of USICA amendments, we respectfully request your support for HOPR Act inclusion in its complete and original form. We understand that there have been suggested technical changes to the bill that will not only negatively impact U.S. manufacturers but also reduce the PPE and critical safety items included in the HOPR amendment text.

Removing critical lifesaving PPE and safety items will weaken the intent of the HOPR Act and increase the possibility that DHS frontline personnel will receive low quality, foreign-made equipment.

The HOPR Act applies to the following covered agencies: Customs and Border Protection, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, Transportation Security Administration, U.S. Secret Service, Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency, Federal Protective Service, Federal Law Enforcement Training Centers, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. These agencies have been identified as frontline components that use, wear, and carry certain equipment.

Covered equipment items used by these personnel included under the HOPR Act include body armor, respiratory protective masks, CBRN protective gear, helmets that provide ballistic protection, protective eyewear, rain gear, cold weather gear, other environmental and flame-resistant clothing, footwear, uniforms, bags and packs, holsters and tactical pouches, patches, insignia and embellishments, hearing protection, and other critical safety items as determined appropriate by the Secretary of Homeland Security.

We also encourage Congress to consider amendments without unnecessary limitations on the length of time these important provisions are in effect. Including a seven-year sunset clause in the HOPR Act amendment would be a significant disincentive for U.S. manufacturers to invest in their domestic supply chain, as the demand signal for American-made goods would be artificially limited. Given their current disadvantage against foreign competitors, American manufacturers would need to make significant long-term capital investments to meet the needs of Homeland Security personnel.

We strongly encourage consideration of the bipartisan HOPR Act as introduced in the Senate on March 25, 2021. Our leaders and membership are available to provide relevant examples and support to ensure that the USICA is as impactful as possible.

Sincerely,

AFL-CIO
American Iron and Steel Institute
American Sheep Institute
Georgia Association of Manufacturers
National Cotton Council
National Council of Textile Organizations
Parachute Industry Association
SEAMS: Association of the U.S. Sewn Products Industry
Service Employees International Union
Sewn Products Equipment and Suppliers of the Americas
Steel Manufacturers Association
United States Footwear Manufacturers Association
United Steelworkers
Warrior Protection and Readiness Coalition
Workers United