

# **Grassley at Hearing on Protecting the Reliability of the U.S.'s Medical Supply Chain During the COVID-19 Pandemic Part 2**

*Prepared Opening Remarks by U.S. Senator Chuck Grassley of Iowa*

*Chairman, Senate Finance Committee*

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[VIDEO](#)

Good morning.

I'd like to welcome everyone to Part 2 of the Committee's hearing on Protecting the Reliability of the U.S.'s Medical Supply Chain During the COVID-19 Pandemic.

This is the second hearing to discuss COVID-19's effect on our nation's medical supply chain.

Two days ago, we heard from the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Procurement, U.S. Customs and Border Protection and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations on their efforts to shore up the integrity of our nation's supply chain.

Today, we will hear from a panel of industry experts who represent all corners of the supply chain. These witnesses have an insider's perspective and will be able to tell us about the challenges our nation's healthcare industry is facing right now.

We will also hear how the Federal government is collaborating and communicating with its industry partners during the pandemic.

Indeed, during our first hearing we heard that DHS is engaged in a whole-of-government response to combat the virus and is working with its federal, state, local, tribal and international partners in a unified effort to ensure the integrity of our nation's supply chain.

For example, we heard from Homeland Security Investigations on their efforts to prevent and investigate criminal activity surrounding the pandemic, and how they seized hundreds of fake and faulty personal protective equipment and returned over \$17 million dollars to victims of COVID-19 fraud.

We also heard from DHS's Chief Procurement Office on their efforts to cut bureaucratic red tape, so that FEMA could easily procure larger volumes of emergency services and supplies.

These are things that frontline workers desperately need, and DHS answered the call by working with industry to review and vet companies offering COVID-19 solutions to the Federal government.

I want to highlight that this continues to be an incredible challenge, as thousands of unscrupulous sellers claim to be able to produce safe and legitimate supplies when what they are actually selling is fake and faulty.

Lastly, we heard from Customs and Border Protection on their efforts to speed up the delivery of high-demand personal protective equipment from manufacturers overseas. As a result of CBP's efforts, over 1.3 billion pieces of personal protective equipment entered swiftly into the United States.

The list goes on, and on. With many of these efforts being initiated at the beginning of the virus' foothold in the United States.

However, my colleagues on the left aren't telling the public these success stories.

They would rather spread their doom-and-gloom narrative for the purposes of winning the election.

It's a fact that the Federal government's approach to emergency preparedness has always been fraught with challenges. This goes back to prior Administrations and beyond.

However, my democratic colleagues would make you believe that these problems are specific to this Administration.

This is simply not true, and we have several witnesses before us today that can testify to this very fact which I will state simply here and now: the Federal government has never been prepared to address a national emergency of this type, or of this scale. Period.

In closing, I want to thank the witnesses present today, and all the medical professionals and first responders, who work day-after-day to keep Americans safe and healthy.

Your dedication to your community is essential in the days and weeks ahead.