

on the front lines wearing a T-shirt and a baseball cap instead of body armor and a helmet.

I heard from nurses in Mason who had to share one gown—not per person, but per entire staff.

I heard from doctors, nurses, and first responders who were bravely answering the call to serve their country, yet they were battling this deadly disease with improvised face shields and homemade solutions.

In my home State of Michigan, we requested millions of medical supplies from the Federal Strategic National Stockpile. Michigan needed millions of masks, gowns, face shields, and ventilators. It quickly became clear that the aid we sought from our national stockpile was delayed and insufficient. The supplies we did receive were woefully inadequate to meet the moment. Some masks arrived so far beyond their expiration date that they were starting to mold.

I found myself doing anything and everything I could to secure personal protective equipment for Michigan, calling dozens of mask manufacturers, negotiating with suppliers in China, and fighting for each and every shipment. My staff remembers some sleepless nights on the phone working to get doctors and nurses in Michigan enough supplies for just a few more days' work in the hospital.

At the same time, manufacturers across my district stepped up to help fill the void and started retooling their businesses to manufacture personal protective equipment for our frontline workers.

In Oxford, Michigan, Vaughn Hockey jumped into action, taking the specialized nylon that they used to make hockey pads and turning it into washable hospital gowns.

Magna International, in my town of Holly, Michigan, retooled their car seat fabric assembly line to make masks for workers and suppliers.

It was American ingenuity and Michigan grit at its finest.

This experience shook me to my core, and I immediately got to work with my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to draft legislation to ensure that America is better prepared for the next pandemic or the next phase of COVID.

Our bill, the Strengthening America's National Stockpile Act, was the product of our bipartisan collaboration and makes important fixes to our national stockpile for medical supplies so that it is fully stocked, maintained, and ready whenever Michigan and other States across the country need it.

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This is even more important as we see the number of COVID cases across the country continue to increase. This bill requires constant upkeep to make sure that the items in the stockpile aren't expired. It infuses transparency into how supplies are distributed from the stockpile, and it helps States create their own stockpiles.

Second, it strengthens the stockpile's finances. It makes efficient use of taxpayer dollars and prevents waste by allowing the stockpile to sell excess supplies to other agencies. It also ensures that taxpayers are properly compensated for the use of stockpile products and boosts its funding.

Critically, it helps reduce our overall dependence on foreign suppliers by incentivizing production of critical medical supplies here in America. It creates a \$500 million pilot program that will allow the stockpile to work directly with American manufacturers to replenish existing supplies, expand our manufacturing capacity, and strengthen these critical supply chains.

Over the next few weeks, I will be visiting a bunch of Michigan companies who could directly benefit from this portion of the bill.

Here in Congress, we have a responsibility to respond to the way this crisis is shaking our communities; to protect our healthcare workers and support the businesses who are adapting to this once-in-a-generation event. Our communities are stepping up and so should we. Passing this bill to better arm our doctors and nurses against this deadly disease is an important way to do that.

I thank my colleagues on both sides of the aisle for passing this legislation with overwhelming, bipartisan support, and I look forward to working together to help keep our fellow Americans safe.

MESSAGE FROM THE SENATE

A message from the Senate by Ms. Byrd, one of its clerks, announced that the Senate has passed bills of the following titles in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. 924. An act to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to require training and education to teachers and other school employees, students, and the community about how to prevent, recognize, respond to, and report child sexual abuse in primary and secondary education.

S. 1160. An act to amend the Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act to increase support for mental health.

S. 1646. An act to designate the community-based outpatient clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in St. Augustine, Florida, as the "Leo C. Chase Jr. Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

S. 4072. An act to designate the clinic of the Department of Veterans Affairs in Bend, Oregon, as the "Robert D. Maxwell Department of Veterans Affairs Clinic".

The message also announced that the Senate has agreed to a concurrent resolution of the following title in which the concurrence of the House is requested:

S. Con. Res. 45. Concurrent Resolution providing for the use of the catafalque situated in the crypt beneath the Rotunda of the Capitol in connection with memorial services to be conducted in the Supreme Court Building and the Capitol for the late honorable Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court.

VALUABLE ROLE FOOD BANKS PLAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. THOMPSON) for 5 minutes.

Mr. THOMPSON of Pennsylvania. Mr. Speaker, earlier this month we celebrated National Food Bank Day. Each year on the first Friday in September, we have an opportunity to recognize the valuable role that food banks play in our communities and offer thanks to the tireless volunteers who help feed hunger-challenged families nationwide.

No matter the time of the year, food banks and food pantries support our neighbors in need with access to food, and throughout the pandemic, we have seen just how critical this access can be.

In 2018, more than 37 million Americans were considered food insecure, including 11 million children. The Department of Agriculture, defines food insecurity as "a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life."

Healthy families need access to quality, nutritious food. As a former chairman of the Committee on Agriculture Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations, this is an issue that I feel very passionately about.

I am pleased to see the success of USDA's Farmers to Families Food Box program and have heard a lot of positive feedback from volunteers and food bank staff in my district.

Through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, or CFAP, the USDA has delivered more than 90 million boxes of fresh, delicious, nutritious food to families in need. Fresh fruits and vegetables, milk and dairy products, meat and more have been distributed by food banks, community centers, and churches nationwide.

I would be remiss if I didn't mention how helpful this has been for our farmers and ranchers as well. Earlier in the pandemic, we heard too many stories of dairy farmers dumping their milk and crops going to waste. The Farmers to Families Food Box program allows farmers to sell their products and crops to be used in the boxes which has reduced waste.

John, from the Christian Food Bank of Elk County in my district, called the boxes a "Godsend," noting that recipients were deeply appreciative and amazed by the quality and variety of the food.

Mel Curtis, director of the Centre County YMCA, said the boxes have been extremely helpful for families because the boxes provide goods that individuals and families with limited income may have to forego at the grocery store.

I would like to give a special shout-out to Mel Curtis and all of the other hardworking people at the Centre County YMCA. I have been particularly impressed with their high energy, can-