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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515-0913

June 5, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis, Governor  
State of Florida  
The Capitol  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

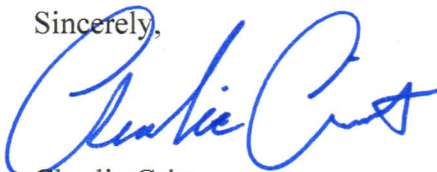
Dear Governor DeSantis:

I write with deep concern about our loved ones and neighbors who reside in care facilities throughout the state. They are, as you correctly stated, "the most vulnerable population" in our state. As you know, nearly half of all COVID-19-related fatalities reported in Florida have been linked to elder care centers. Between April and May alone, the death toll increased by nearly 600 percent. They are not simply statistics, they are people, leaving behind grieving families distraught that the facilities they trusted to care for them could not keep them safe.

In Pinellas County alone, we have close to 250 long-term care centers, including Freedom Square of Seminole, which has had some of the highest death tolls among nursing homes in the state. I understand that the Florida Department of Health in conjunction with the Florida National Guard is aiming to test all residents and employees of long-term care facilities within the next two weeks. While I wish widescale testing had taken place before we lost so many vulnerable Floridians, I applaud the goal of 100% testing of nursing home and assisted living residents and staff. We must continue these measures every week, until all Americans have confidence that their loved ones in Florida nursing homes are safe.

Successfully executing this ambitious and necessary testing plan will require sourcing materials and reagents, distributing an adequate supply to every care facility in the state, and ensuring personnel and personal protective equipment necessary to administer the tests safely and effectively. And to address concerns Floridians may have about such an undertaking, sunlight is the best disinfectant. As your administration goes about the vital task of testing our most vulnerable, I ask that you please keep the public informed on the specific plan of action and the progress toward this critical testing goal. Publishing specific timelines, metrics, and results would go a long way in shoring up public confidence.

Sincerely,



Charlie Crist  
UNITED STATES CONGRESSMAN