

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Seema Verma  
Administrator  
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services  
Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Administrator Verma:

In the midst of one of the worst pandemics in modern history, we are writing out of concern regarding a notice that the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) issued to state and local government officials on March 21, 2020, that could put the lives of American workers in grave danger.

The CMS notice titled “Responding to the Coronavirus: Essential Mission Infrastructure Support – Health Care Services Delivery Support – Medicare & Medicaid – ACTION” urges state and local governments to continue in-person call center operations operated via a federal contract by Maximus at 11 locations in the wake of a growing global health crisis. The notice insists that call centers remain open because “there is currently no infrastructure in place for the call center to run via telework in any location.” It is troubling that, despite universal uncertainty over how long this crisis will last, CMS does not outline a process for creating that telework infrastructure.

While we recognize that call center operations are crucial to the well-being of millions of Americans, it is concerning that CMS is pursuing the status quo without considering the well-being of workers or the sustainability of a policies that risk their health. Maximus has already been forced to close call centers in Kentucky, Mississippi, and Louisiana due to COVID-19 outbreaks at the centers in these states.<sup>1</sup> Thousands of workers are now at risk of contracting the virus and continuing to spread it in their communities. This risk is especially worrisome given the key services that these workers are providing by ensuring the public's access to health care coverage in the midst of a pandemic.

We ask you to promptly alter this guidance and instead adopt a policy for all contractors that includes the following:

- Remote work policies for every worker possible;
- Full access to paid sick leave for all workers and a waiver of penalties for use of that sick leave;
- Assurance that workers who miss work due to illness, illness of a family member, or closure of a school or child care center will not lose their jobs due to attendance;
- Assessments of increased staffing needs due to necessary worker safety and leave policies;

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.hattiesburgamerican.com/story/news/local/2020/03/31/maximus-responds-hattiesburg-coronavirus-case/5094254002/> and <https://www.wtvq.com/2020/03/30/maximus-closing-monday-employee-presumed-positive-covid-19/>; <https://maximus.com/employees#>

- Robust workplace safety policies, including social distancing, thorough cleaning of work spaces, and proper protective and sanitation equipment to protect any workers who must come to work in person.

Thank you in advance for your quick attention to this issue.

Sincerely,



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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Also signed by:

/s/  
Deb Haaland  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress

/s/  
André Carson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jesús G. “Chuy” García  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alan Lowenthal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Katherine Clark  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Rosa DeLauro  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Peter A. DeFazio  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Andy Levin  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Daniel T. Kildee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress

/s/  
David N. Cicilline  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Tony Cárdenas  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Joseph P. Kennedy, III  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

/s/  
James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Elliot Engel  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Marcy Kaptur  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Bobby L. Rush  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
Member of Congress

/s/  
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress