



Founded 1889

United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipe Fitting Industry of the United States and Canada

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General Office File Reference: GP

August 25, 2022

The Honorable Gina Raimondo
U.S. Secretary of Commerce
1401 Constitution Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20230

Dear Secretary Raimondo,

On behalf of the more than 359,000 hardworking men and women of the United Association of Union Plumbers and Pipefitters, I write to express our concern regarding the World Trade Organization's (WTO) waiver of intellectual property protections for COVID-19 vaccines. Expanding the waiver to COVID-19 diagnostic devices and treatments, as many WTO members are proposing, would endanger American jobs without improving global health.

From the earliest days of the COVID-19 pandemic, American ingenuity was on full display – and United Association members played a critical role in the research and development of potential vaccines and drug treatments. Our members partner with the pharmaceutical and biomedical companies to build the high-tech, state-of-the-art facilities needed to develop and mass produce these lifesaving vaccines. Even more, United Association members were quick to construct temporary hospitals around the United States in convention centers, hockey arenas, and countless other sites in the early days of this pandemic.

Simply put, this proposed waiver would give away patented American technologies to our rivals like India and China without improving overall vaccination rates or making treatments more accessible. Instead, it will hamper investments in the biotech sector and effectively ship American jobs overseas by enabling foreign companies to take on a greater share of production in the global pharmaceutical space. These intellectual property protections are critical to both creating and protecting American jobs, and to safeguarding the health of our communities.

There is an old saying in our industry: "The Plumber protects the health of the nation." Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, our members have gone above and beyond to live up to this old creed. I urge you to stand with American workers and American industry against the misguided attempts by the WTO to further expand the IP waiver to COVID-19 diagnostics and treatments, and to stand with the men and women of the United Association as we continue to protect the health of the nation.

Sincerely yours,

Mark McManus
General President
United Association

