



## United States Senate

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Dr. Mark T. Esper  
Secretary of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Esper,

I write to respectfully request that you consider immediately deploying the USNS Mercy to the port of Los Angeles to help relieve our current health care system in response to the coronavirus outbreak.

As you know, California has been disproportionately affected by the federal government's repatriation of Americans who contracted the virus abroad, which is causing the state's health care system to become overloaded. In some parts of our state, the case rate is doubling every four days. Moreover, we have community-acquired transmission in 23 counties, with an increase of 44 community-acquired infections over the past 24 hours.

The USNS Mercy would help relieve our state's health care system by allowing the Los Angeles region to ensure that it has the capacity to address critical non-infectious acute care needs in addition to the rapid rise in coronavirus cases. The population density in the Los Angeles region is similar to that of New York City, where the USNS Comfort is deploying.

I am grateful for your leadership during this challenging time, and I very much appreciate your attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dianne Feinstein".

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator

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