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

COMMITTEE ON RULES
APPROPRIATIONS
TRANSPORTATION, AND HOUSING AND
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND RELATED AGENCIES
STATE, FOREIGN OPERATIONS, AND
RELATED PROGRAMS
FINANCIAL SERVICES AND
GENERAL GOVERNMENT
REGIONAL WHIP

January 5, 2022

Ms. Beth Spivey
Secretary for Legislative Affairs
Department of Homeland Security
301 7th Street, SW, Mail Stop 0150
Washington, DC 20528-0150

Dear Ms. Spivey:

I had the opportunity to take a tour of the Western Region Forms Office for the United States Citizenship & Immigration Service (USCIS) in Montclair, California, in the fall of 2021. During the tour, there was some mention of COVID-19 tests that were being stockpiled but they needed a public health nurse to administer them.

My staff recently followed up with the USCIS Forms Office and found that the facility is stockpiling close to 3,000 antigen test home kit boxes on behalf of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security with expiration dates for January 2022.

The Southern California region is experiencing the latest wave of COVID-19, and once again there is a regional shortage of testing capacity. My constituents cannot make appointments with their medical providers, nor can they make an appointment at a county-administered site. In this crisis, those antigen tests are urgently needed, and could be put into better use serving the general public instead of wasting away in the back of the USCIS Western Region Forms Office warehouse.

To help address these issues, and to ensure that these tests are used in a timely manner, I request that you release these available and unused test kits to my office so we can distribute them to the general public in time to address the current COVID-19 testing crisis currently affecting our region of California.

If you have any questions, please contact my Case Manager Rafael Trujillo on his telework cell phone at (909) 767-7038. It is of utmost importance to me that we address this issue quickly so we can do our part to help the general public through the current testing crisis.

Sincerely,

NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress
35th Congressional District
NJT:rt



**U.S. Citizenship
and Immigration
Services**

January 18, 2022

The Honorable Norma J. Torres
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Torres:

Thank you for your January 5, 2022 letter to the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) expressing concern about U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) retaining COVID-19 test kits at its Western Forms Center. The DHS Office of Legislative Affairs asked that I respond on their behalf.

USCIS has acquired COVID-19 self-test kits to reduce the possibility of asymptomatic infected employees interacting with customers and co-workers and unknowingly infecting them. USCIS employees who are close contacts to positive confirmed COVID-19 cases are immediately shipped a self-test kit to self-administer 5-7 days after a close contact incident to confirm they do not have COVID-19, and USCIS employees who have requested and been granted an exception to the Federal employee vaccination mandate will be tested prior to entry to any USCIS facility. Additionally, test kits are being distributed to all USCIS facilities for use by USCIS employees that believe they may be infected in the event they are unable to timely secure a test kit or arrange for testing on their own.

Testing is a critical component of our overall commitment to ensuring the health and safety of USCIS employees and to the customers of the immigration process that we interact with in USCIS facilities.

While you are correct that the test kits currently stored at the Western Forms Center bear expiration dates of January 2022, it has become routine for these kits to be extended by the Food and Drug Administration for 90 to 180 days. We are expecting an extension to these kits imminently.

I understand the difficulties that many in our communities are experiencing in securing COVID-19 test kits. I hope you will appreciate that USCIS will use the test kits appropriately in an effort to continue operations, address our backlogs, and—most importantly—keep our employees, our customers, and our communities healthy while we fulfill our mission of adjudicating immigration and naturalization benefits in a timely manner. These test kits will

The Honorable Norma J. Torres

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help to minimize interruption and delay due to COVID that plagued our agency early in the pandemic and contributed to unprecedented backlogs we are working to resolve today.

Thank you again for your letter and interest in this important issue. Should you require any additional assistance, please have your staff contact the USCIS Office of Legislative Affairs at (240) 721-3801.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ur M. Jaddou", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Ur M. Jaddou
Director