

CWA President Chris Shelton and IUE-CWA President Carl Kennebrew sent letters to the following U.S. Senators on Monday, March 30, urging them to support efforts to get GE to begin manufacturing ventilators and initiate enhanced policies to protect workers in essential facilities. The Senators are from states where GE has excess capacity.

The letter to Senator Brown is attached.

Kansas

Senator Pat Roberts
Senator Jerry Moran

Kentucky

Senator Mitch McConnell
Senator Rand Paul

Massachusetts

Senator Ed Markey
Senator Elizabeth Warren

New York

Senator Chuck Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

Ohio

Senator Sherrod Brown
Senator Rob Portman

Texas

Senator John Cornyn
Senator Ted Cruz

Virginia

Senator Mark Warner
Senator Tim Kaine



Communication Workers of America
501 3rd Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

March 30, 2020

Dear Senator Brown,

We seek your support in our effort to convince General Electric to begin manufacturing ventilators in Ohio and to implement workplace health policies that meet the needs of those who are currently at work in Ohio and at their manufacturing facilities nationwide.

As you may know, General Electric company is one of America's leading producers of ventilators, the very scarce medical devices now in short supply that are used to keep the most medically compromised COVID-19 patients alive. GE is so highly regarded in this field that other corporations are seeking and receiving help from GE to start their own production of ventilators.

The irony here is that our members have the skills and capacity needed to manufacture ventilators now. **Our IUE-CWA members who work at GE facilities in New York, Ohio, Massachusetts, Kansas, Kentucky, and Texas are ready to do this work NOW!**

GE has capacity in several locations where they have announced either a closing or layoff. Here are some examples:

- Dallas Texas, IUE-CWA Local 86788 - On February 20, 2018, GE announced the intent to close this shop with highly skilled employees that keep our national electric grid running.
- Salem, Virginia, IUE-CWA Local 82161 - On November 28, 2019, GE closed this factory that has over 1 million square feet that sits empty.
- Arkansas, Kansas, IUE-CWA Local 86004 - On March 23, 2020, GE announced they would be putting 353 members on layoff because of a temporary lack of work. Our members there overhaul and repair jet engines both commercial and military.
- Madisonville, Kentucky, IUE-CWA Local 83701 has over 13,000 square feet that's empty and could be used immediately. Our members there produce parts for military jet engines.
- Lynn, Massachusetts, IUE-CWA Local 81201 - This GE facility manufactures jet engines and parts for military aircrafts. The facility at one time employed 20,000 workers. Now only 1,230 workers are employed there amid cavernous, empty manufacturing spaces.
- Schenectady, New York, IUE-CWA Local 81301 produces generators for the power grids in the USA and throughout the world. This facility which also formerly employed 20,000 workers now employs just over 800 and clearly has significant excess capacity.



- Both Cleveland, Ohio, IUE-CWA Local 84707 and IUE-CWA Local 85704 in Bucyrus, Ohio manufacture state-of-the art lighting components and have the capacity and skills to bring in equipment immediately to start production of ventilators.

Today we are calling on General Electric's CEO H. Lawrence Culp to immediately begin to bring this work to facilities across the country that have the immediate capacity and skill set necessary to build ventilators.

In addition, we are also calling on General Electric to initiate enhanced policies warranted by the pandemic to protect those of members who continue to work in production facilities deemed essential. Currently GE has a patchwork of policies in their individual locations. Though some tailoring of policies may be warranted to align to different workplaces we are asking GE to meet with our union leadership and outside industrial health specialists on both the national and local levels.

We are holding a press conference today, Monday, March 30 at 12:30 P.M. to raise these issues publicly. We hope that you will quickly and publicly endorse our appeal to GE's CEO. We also hope you will join us and ask the Trump administration to allocate funds through the Defense Production Act to assist in coordinating the manufacturing, sales and distribution of ventilators.

We are saying to GE that America cannot wait. Union members across the country are ready to work through this crisis. Let's put your constituents to work saving Americans!

Sincerely,

Chris Shelton, President, CWA

Carl Kennebrew, President, IUE-CWA