

May 6, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell, Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer, Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leaders McConnell, McCarthy and Schumer:

Thank you for your leadership and continued work to protect Americans, stabilize the economy, and ensure the survival of key institutions and sectors during this challenging time. We represent a group of chambers of commerce from 39 states working with employers and businesses of all sizes and industries to respond to our national public health crisis.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided much-needed relief to many of our members, however, in practice, there are critical gaps in the CARES Act that fail to meet the needs of important organizations in our communities. If cultural institutions like aquariums, zoos, performing arts centers, and museums are to survive this crisis, we request that the U.S. Congress work swiftly to enact the following provisions:

- Increase the allocation to at least \$6 billion for the Institute of Museums and Library Services to provide direct economic relief for non-profit museums, aquariums, zoos, and performing arts centers. This funding should be used to provide grants for operational support, distance learning, and pandemic recovery planning and implementation.
- Increase and extend the Paycheck Protection Program and loan forgiveness provisions in the CARES Act through December 2020 and make non-profits – including zoos, aquariums, performing arts centers, and museums, with greater than 500 employees – eligible for loan forgiveness.
- Expand the universal charitable deduction provision by removing the \$300 cap and by eliminating the 60% limit on Adjusted Gross Income that may be deducted through charitable gifts of cash.
- Support the proposals of the Americans for the Arts that will stabilize both the assets of cultural organizations while they wait to reopen and help them when restarting is possible.

Collectively, the nation's performing arts centers, museums, zoos, and aquariums are losing millions of dollars a day due to closures and are in desperate need of significant federal support to continue to employ many thousands of people, rebuild our nation's tourism industry, and simply survive the months to come. As cash-based businesses, our economic stability depends on revenue generated from our

visitors. Initial furloughs and layoffs of personnel began in many institutions and will escalate as closures extend and event cancellations continue. Over and above losses in earned revenue and unremitted expenses, these organizations are projecting a decline in charitable contributions as donors reassess their capacity to give.

The pandemic will have a devastating impact on performing arts centers, museums, aquariums, and zoos, which operate on thin margins of financial sustainability and without large designated operational reserve funds or access to tax-relief benefits. These institutions are important to every community, exposing residents to creativity and education and enhancing their quality of life.

Combined, the items listed above represent the minimum required support mechanisms to ensure that Americans still have these venerable and treasured places of learning, inspiration, and connection in our communities when better days return, and we are all able to leave our homes, travel to favorite destinations, and spend time with our family and friends.

Sincerely,

Allentown Chamber of Commerce
Amplify Clearwater
Baton Rouge Area Chamber
Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce
Billings Chamber of Commerce
Boise Metro Chamber
Boone Area Chamber of Commerce
Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce
Capital Region (NY) Chamber
Carbon Chamber & Economic Development Corporation
Carmel Chamber of Commerce
Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce
Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut
Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii
ChamberRVA
ChamberSOUTH
Charlotte Regional Business Alliance
Chattanooga Area Chamber
Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
Columbia Chamber
Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce
Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce
Delaware State Chamber of Commerce

Detroit Regional Chamber
DuBuque Area Chamber of Commerce
East Penn Chamber of Commerce
Easton Area Chamber of Commerce
Emmaus Main Street Partners
Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership
Findlay Hancock County Chamber of Commerce
Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce
Goleta Valley Historical Society
Greater Akron Chamber
Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce
Greater Baltimore Committee
Greater Bath Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Bentonville Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
Greater Boston Chamber
Greater Cayce - West Columbia Chamber of Commerce
Greater Cleveland Partnership
Greater Des Moines Partnership
Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce
Greater Houston Partnership
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
Greater Lexington Chamber and Visitor Center
Greater Louisville Inc.
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce
Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber of Commerce
Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
Greater Oklahoma City Chamber

Greater Omaha Chamber
Greater Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce
Greater Phoenix Chamber
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
Greater Utica Chamber
Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
Greenville Chamber
Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce
Hellertown-Lower Saucon Chamber of Commerce
Huntington Regional Chamber of Commerce
Indy Chamber
Iowa City Area Business Partnership
Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawaii
La Habra Chamber of Commerce
Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Licking County Chamber of Commerce
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
Little Rock Regional Chamber
Los Angeles Area Chamber
Lubbock Chamber of Commerce
Lumberton Area Chamber of Commerce
Mesa Chamber of Commerce
Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
Metro Hartford Alliance
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce
Miami-Dade Bay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce
Mobile Area Chamber
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce
Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
MPLS Regional Chamber
Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce
Nazareth Business Council
Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce
Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
Orland Park Area Chamber of Commerce
Orlando Economic Partnership
Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce
Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce
Phillipsburg Area Chamber of Commerce
Pocono Chamber of Commerce
Raleigh Chamber
Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce
Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce
Salt Lake Chamber
San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
Seminole County Chamber
Southern Lehigh Chamber of Commerce
Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce
Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce
St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce
Stoneham Chamber of Commerce
Tampa Bay Chamber
Tempe Chamber of Commerce
Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce
The Chamber of the Santa Barbara Region
The Reno+Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Thurston County Chamber
Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
Tulsa Regional Chamber
Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce
Urban Chamber of Commerce
Vegas Chamber
Visit Rochester
Visit Tucson
West Virginia Chamber of Commerce
West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce
Western Lehigh Chamber of Commerce
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce
Yuba Sutter Chamber of Commerce