

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