



August 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 205 chambers of commerce from all 50 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 failed to meet the needs of important organizations in our communities. An American Alliance of Museums survey found that nearly a third of museums surveyed fear possible permanent closure as soon as this Fall.¹ Americans for the Arts estimates the total economic impact on Arts & Culture organizations to be \$9.1 billion in losses to date, with an additional \$10.4 billion in event-related spending by arts consumers at local businesses (restaurants, lodging, retail) due to the loss of more than 327 million visitors since the start of the crisis.² If cultural institutions like aquariums, zoos, performance 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 and the National Endowment for the Arts, and the National Endowment for the Humanities 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.
- Require the Federal Reserve to broaden their nonprofit lending facility under the Main Street Lending Program to specifically benefit mid-size nonprofits to those with more than 500 employees, and a loan forgiveness option.
- Increase and extend the Paycheck Protection Program and loan forgiveness provisions in the CARES Act by enabling a second round of funding for all non-profits – including zoos, aquariums, museums, and performing arts centers with greater than 500 employees.

¹ American Alliance of Museums: [United States May Lose One-Third of All Museums, Survey Shows](#)

² Americans for the Arts: [Economic Impact of Coronavirus on the Arts and Culture Sector](#)

- Expand the universal charitable deduction provision by enacting the provisions of S. 4032/H.R. 7324 to increase the amount to one-third of the standard deduction, allow all taxpayers to claim the deduction on both 2019 and 2020 returns including through amended 2019 returns, and extend the charitable deduction provided by the CARES Act through 2021.

Collectively, the nation’s performing arts centers, museums, zoos, and aquariums are losing nearly \$33 million 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.³ As cash-based businesses, their economic stability depends on revenue generated from visitors. To date, more than 62,000 employees have been laid off, nearly 50,000 furloughed and an addition 8,000 jobs remain unfilled due to hiring freezes in the arts and culture sector.⁴ 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.

These institutions are important to every community, exposing residents to creativity and education and enhancing their quality of life. Critically, as they are often the destination for visitors from surrounding communities, these institutions also serve as economic drivers responsible for drawing patronage to surrounding small businesses.

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,

Alaska

Greater Wasilla Chamber of Commerce

Alabama

Mobile Area Chamber

Arkansas

Greater Bentonville Area Chamber of Commerce
Little Rock Regional Chamber

Arizona

Greater Oro Valley Chamber of Commerce
Greater Phoenix Chamber
Mesa Chamber of Commerce
Tempe Chamber of Commerce
Visit Tucson

California

Bay Area Council
Berkeley Chamber of Commerce

Nebraska

Greater Omaha Chamber
Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce
Lincoln Chamber of Commerce

New Hampshire

Greater Dover Chamber of Commerce
Greater Manchester Chamber
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce

New Jersey

Hunterdon County Chamber of Commerce
New Jersey Chamber of Commerce
Somerset County Business Partnership
Southern Ocean County Chamber of Commerce
The Princeton Mercer Regional Chamber

³ American Alliance of Museums: [Advocacy Alert](#)

⁴ [Americans for the Arts: The Economic Impact of Coronavirus on the Arts and Culture Sector](#)

Carmel Chamber of Commerce
Coronado Chamber of Commerce
Costa Mesa Chamber of Commerce
Goleta Valley Historical Society
Greater Irvine Chamber of Commerce
La Habra Chamber of Commerce
Los Angeles Area Chamber
Monterey Peninsula Chamber of Commerce
Oakland Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce
Orange County Business Council
Pacific Grove Chamber of Commerce
Palm Desert Area Chamber of Commerce
San Diego Asian Business Association
San Diego Regional Chamber of Commerce
San Francisco Chamber of Commerce
Santa Ana Chamber of Commerce
Santa Barbara South Coast Chamber of Commerce
Tompkins County Chamber of Commerce
Yuba Sutter Chamber of Commerce

Colorado

Aurora Chamber of Commerce
Denver Metro Chamber of Commerce

Connecticut

Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce
Greater Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
Metro Hartford Alliance

Delaware

Delaware State Chamber of Commerce

Florida

Amplify Clearwater
ChamberSOUTH
Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce
Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce
Jensen Beach Chamber of Commerce
Lakeland Chamber of Commerce
Miami-Dade Gay & Lesbian Chamber of Commerce
Orlando Economic Partnership
Seminole County Chamber
St. Lucie County Chamber of Commerce
Tampa Bay Chamber

Georgia

Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce

New Mexico

Greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce

Nevada

The Reno+Sparks Chamber of Commerce
Urban Chamber of Commerce
Urban Chamber of Commerce
Vegas Chamber

New York

Buffalo Niagara Partnership
Capital Region Chamber
Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce
Greater Binghamton Chamber of Commerce
Greater Rochester Chamber of Commerce
Greater Utica Chamber
Mount Vernon Chamber of Commerce
Queens Chamber of Commerce
Staten Island Chamber of Commerce
Visit Rochester

Ohio

Cincinnati USA Regional Chamber
Columbus Chamber of Commerce
Dayton Area Chamber of Commerce
Findlay Hancock County Chamber of Commerce
Greater Akron Chamber
Greater Cleveland Partnership
Licking County Chamber of Commerce
Willoughby Western Lake County Chamber of Commerce

Oklahoma

Greater Oklahoma City Chamber
Tulsa Regional Chamber

Oregon

Portland Business Alliance

Pennsylvania

Allentown Chamber of Commerce
Bethlehem Chamber of Commerce
Carbon Chamber & Economic Development Corporation
Chamber of Commerce for Greater Philadelphia
East Penn Area Chamber of Commerce
Easton Area Chamber of Commerce

Hawai'i

Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii
Hawai'i Island Chamber of Commerce
Japanese Chamber of Commerce & Industry of Hawaii

Iowa

DuBuque Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Des Moines Partnership
Iowa City Area Business Partnership

Idaho

Boise Metro Chamber

Illinois

Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce
Oak Lawn Chamber of Commerce
Oak Park - River Forest Chamber of Commerce
Orland Park Area Chamber of Commerce
Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce
Wicker Park Bucktown Chamber of Commerce

Indiana

Indy Chamber
Southwest Indiana Chamber of Commerce
Terre Haute Chamber of Commerce

Kansas

Newton Convention & Visitors Bureau
Salina Area Chamber of Commerce

Kentucky

Fleming County Chamber of Commerce
Greater Louisville Inc.
Marion County Chamber of Commerce
Northern Kentucky Chamber of Commerce
Paducah Area Chamber of Commerce

Louisiana

Baton Rouge Area Chamber
Central Louisiana Regional Chamber of Commerce

Massachusetts

Cape Cod Chamber of Commerce
Greater Boston Chamber of Commerce
Middlesex West Chamber of Commerce
Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce
Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce
Stoneham Chamber of Commerce
Worcester Regional Chamber of Commerce

Emmaus Main Street Partners
Erie Regional Chamber & Growth Partnership
Greater Bath Area Chamber of Commerce
Greater Lehigh Valley Chamber of Commerce
Greater Northern Lehigh Chamber of Commerce
Greater Pittsburgh Chamber of Commerce
Harrisburg Regional Chamber & CREDC
Hellertown-Lower Saucon Chamber of Commerce
Lancaster Chamber of Commerce
Nazareth Business Council
Northampton Area Chamber of Commerce
Phillipsburg Area Chamber of Commerce
Pocono Chamber of Commerce
Southern Lehigh Chamber of Commerce
Western Lehigh Chamber of Commerce

Rhode Island

Central Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce
Greater Newport Chamber of Commerce
Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce
Southern Rhode Island Chamber of Commerce

South Carolina

Beaufort Regional Chamber of Commerce
Charleston Metro Chamber of Commerce
Columbia Chamber of Commerce
Greater Cayce - West Columbia Chamber of Commerce
Greater Lexington Chamber and Visitor Center
Greensboro Chamber of Commerce
Greenville Chamber of Commerce
Hilton Head Island-Bluffton Chamber of Commerce

South Dakota

Pierre Area Chamber of Commerce

Tennessee

Chattanooga Area Chamber
Greater Memphis Chamber
Nashville Area Chamber of Commerce

Maryland

Greater Baltimore Committee
Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce

Maine

Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce

Michigan

Ann Arbor/Ypsilanti Regional Chamber
Detroit Regional Chamber
Eastpointe-Roseville Chamber of Commerce
Flint & Genesee Chamber of Commerce
Saginaw County Chamber of Commerce

Minnesota

MPLS Regional Chamber
Saint Paul Area Chamber of Commerce

Missouri

Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
Kirkwood-Des Peres Area Chamber of Commerce
South Kansas City Chamber of Commerce
St. Louis Regional Chamber of Commerce

Mississippi

Mississippi Gulf Coast Chamber of Commerce

Montana

Billings Chamber of Commerce
West Yellowstone Chamber of Commerce

North Carolina

Boone Area Chamber of Commerce
Charlotte Regional Business Alliance
Greater Durham Chamber of Commerce
Lumberton Area Chamber of Commerce
Raleigh Chamber of Commerce
Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce

North Dakota

Bismarck Mandan Chamber EDC
Minot Area Chamber of Commerce

Texas

Brownsville Chamber of Commerce
Fort Worth Chamber of Commerce
Greater Houston Partnership
Laredo Chamber of Commerce
Lubbock Chamber of Commerce
McAllen Chamber of Commerce
Rio Grande Valley Partnership
San Antonio Chamber of Commerce
Tyler Area Chamber of Commerce

Utah

Salt Lake Chamber

Virginia

ChamberRVA
Martinsville-Henry County Chamber of
Commerce
Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Vermont

Burlington Chamber of Commerce
Rutland Region Chamber of Commerce

Washington

Seattle Metropolitan Chamber of
Commerce
Thurston County Chamber

Wisconsin

Envision Greater Fond du Lac
Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce
Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of
Commerce

West Virginia

Huntington Regional Chamber of
Commerce
West Virginia Chamber of Commerce

Wyoming

Greater Cheyenne Chamber of Commerce
Wyoming State Chamber of Commerce