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. 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. 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

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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

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

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

Association of Chamber of Commerce Executives  
1330 Braddock Place, Suite 300 | Alexandria, VA 22314-6400 | 703-998-0072 | www.acce.org
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
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