



June 15, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
United States House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy and Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your bipartisan efforts to address the COVID-19 Pandemic and your work to ensure that Americans remain safe as our economy begins to reopen. The measures put in place to assist businesses and individuals in this unprecedented time have positively impacted each of our states and is deeply appreciated.

We collectively represent 9300 major employers with a workforce of 5.3 million in 15 states. Our member companies are critical players in jumpstarting the economy and ensuring employees can return to work safely and quickly.

As we embark on a path toward reopening and recovery, business and all levels of government must work in close collaboration. To facilitate a healthy recovery from this pandemic, businesses need

reasonable liability protection to reopen their doors; and, in the wake of COVID-19 related expenses and revenue losses, cities and states need federal assistance to ensure they can provide critical services that will enable the business to re-open and flourish.

Liability Protection

As states begin to ease restrictions and allow the economy to reopen, the threat of legal uncertainty and liability risk may curtail progress towards normalcy without reasonable protections. Businesses must implement public health guidelines to curb the virus's spread. But, as they do so they remain unprotected from costly and arduous litigation over potential COVID-19 exposure at their places of business and privacy regulation in screening, testing and tracing the virus.

Further action is needed on the federal level to protect employers that are making – and in many cases exceeding – reasonable, good faith efforts to follow health and safety guidelines for protecting customers and employees. This measured approach is not intended to provide coverage in cases of gross or willful negligence, but rather to assure businesses that are following state and federal guidelines that they will have temporary safe harbor protection as they work to reopen our economy and bring people back to work.

State and Local Funding

State and local governments have been severely impacted by COVID-19 and are facing significant budget deficits resulting from the cost of addressing the pandemic, unprecedented unemployment and plummeting tax revenue. This is a devastating fiscal challenge and one that states are unlikely to be able to address on their own. Cities and states require federal aid to compensate for the lost revenues and COVID-19 expenditures to enable public services to resume and businesses to reopen.

We respectfully request that the fourth stimulus package include significant aid for state and local governments so that they can continue to safely reopen their economies while continuing to respond to the pandemic. We are not asking for a “bailout” for profligate spenders, but for federal investment in our states’ and cities’ recovery.

Thank you again for your leadership throughout this crisis. Liability protection and state and local funding are vital to restoring the nation’s economy and our organizations and member companies stand ready to support you as you address these issues and identify solutions.

Sincerely,

Katie Britt, President
Business Council of Alabama

Doug Rothwell, President & CEO
Business Leaders for Michigan

Rob Lapsley, President
California Business Roundtable

Joseph Brennan, President & CEO
Connecticut Business and Industry Association

Neil Giuliano, President & CEO
Greater Phoenix Leadership

Gary Kai, Executive Director
Hawaii Business Roundtable

Joe Murphy, Executive Director
Iowa Business Council

Michael Olivier, CEO
Louisiana Committee of 100

JD Chesloff, Executive Director
Massachusetts Business Roundtable

Charlie Weaver, Executive Director
Minnesota Business Partnership

Duncan Wyse, President
Oregon Business Council

Kathy Wylde, President & CEO
Partnership for New York City

Tom Giordano, Executive Director
Partnership for Rhode Island

Lisa Ventriss, President
Vermont Business Roundtable

Steve Mullin, President
Washington Roundtable