



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.<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>2</sup> 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.

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

<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup> 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

<sup>3</sup> American Alliance of Museums: [Advocacy Alert](#)

<sup>4</sup> [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