

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 17, 2022

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
U.S. House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Chair DeLauro,

We write to ask that much-needed relief for our nation's hardest-hit small businesses, including those in the restaurant, fitness, hospitality, live events, and travel industries, be prioritized as Congress looks to pass supplemental COVID-19 relief.

Previous federal relief efforts like the Restaurant Revitalization Fund (RRF), Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), and the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) helped countless small businesses survive the pandemic, saving millions of jobs and helping better position our economy for a post-pandemic recovery. However, many small businesses – especially those that rely on in-person gathering – either exhausted their aid long ago or received none at all, and they are experiencing a recovery that continues to be slower than the recovery of our nation's overall economy.¹ Now, tens of thousands of our most resilient small businesses still face the possibility of outright closure for circumstances largely out of their control, barring additional federal relief.

The statistics that back up the need for additional relief are clear. The live events industry reports that 99 percent of producing and presenting organizations were forced to cancel events throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This resulted in the loss of hundreds of millions in event support revenue and negatively impacted not only live event venues, but also affiliated businesses like events planners, AV companies, rental suppliers, and more.² In the hospitality industry, 88 percent of restaurants reported experiencing a decline in demand for indoor dining due to the Omicron variant.³ The fitness industry, which plays a critical role in keeping Americans healthy, has seen nearly 1 in 4 facilities closed permanently due to the pandemic.⁴ Falling case rates and the sunseting of COVID-related restrictions will not be enough to compensate for two years of severe revenue shortfalls and mounting debts.

It is not enough to pay lip service to small businesses. Congress must rise to the occasion with fierce urgency and do everything in our power to maintain the strength of our small business ecosystem. Doing so requires swift action to address the gaps created by previous pandemic relief programs, with a focus on small businesses in the hardest-hit industries. Failing to include relief for struggling small businesses at this critical juncture is tantamount to turning a

¹ Mitchell Barnes, et al., *11 Facts on the Economic Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic*, The Hamilton Project, (September 29, 2021), https://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/11_facts_on_the_economic_recovery_from_the_covid_19_pandemic.

² Randy Cohen, *COVID-19 Pandemic Impact on The Arts Research Update*, Americans for the Arts (November 30, 2021), <https://www.americansforthearts.org/node/103614>.

³ National Restaurant Association, *Letter to Congress RRF Omicron Survey Results*, (January 24, 2022), <https://restaurant.org/NRA/media/Downloads/PDFs/advocacy/2022/Letter-to-Congress-RRF-Omicron-Survey-Results.pdf>.

⁴ Kaitee Anderson Fernandez, *How Many Gyms Survived the Devastation that was 2020?*, The Global Health & Fitness Association, (August 5, 2021), <https://www.ihrsa.org/improve-your-club/industry-news/how-many-gyms-survived-the-devastation-that-was-2020/>.

blind eye not only to these businesses but also to the workers they employ and the local communities that depend on them as well.

We remain optimistic and stand ready to work with you on supplemental legislation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. However, we would be hesitant to support such legislation if it did not include critical relief for our nation's hardest-hit small businesses. Without relief, every passing day is nothing short of willingly allowing our districts' small businesses to close their doors that – outside of the economic havoc of a global pandemic – would remain open.

Thank you for your continued leadership during these difficult and unprecedented times. We stand ready to work with you to help further our economic recovery by supporting our nation's small businesses – before it is too late.

Sincerely,



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Colin Allred
Member of Congress

Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

Anthony Brown
Member of Congress

Andre Carson
Member of Congress

Ed Case
Member of Congress

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress

Angie Craig
Member of Congress

Charlie Crist
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Madeleine Dean
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Ted Deutch
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Veronica Escobar
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Adriano Espaillat
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Dwight Evans
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Jahana Hayes
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Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress

Derek Kilmer
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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Stephen Lynch
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Grace Meng
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Jerrold Nadler
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Jimmy Panetta
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Stacey Plaskett
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Deborah K. Ross
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Kathleen Rice
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Tim Ryan
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Adam Schiff
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Dina Titus
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Peter Welch
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