



May 7, 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:

On behalf of the Chemung County Chamber of Commerce, I wanted to 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.

Although the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act provided much-needed relief for many of our members, there are critical gaps in the CARES Act that fail to meet the needs of important institutions in New York's Southern Tier Region. If cultural institutions like performing arts centers, museums, and other attractions 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 to provide direct economic relief for non-profit museums, performing arts centers, and other cultural institutions to provide grants for operational support, distance learning, and pandemic recovery planning and implementation.
- Increase and extend the Paycheck Protection Program and loan forgiveness provisions in the CARES Act through December 2020 and make non-profits, including those with more than 500 employees, eligible for loan forgiveness.

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- Expand the universal charitable deduction provision by removing the \$300 cap and by eliminating the 60% limit on Adjusted Gross Income that may be deducted through charitable gifts of cash.
- Support the proposals of the Americans for the Arts that will stabilize both the assets of cultural organizations while they wait to reopen and help them when restarting is possible.

Regionally, performing arts centers, like our deeply cherished Clemens Center, museums, and other cultural institutions are losing thousands of dollars a day due to closures and are in desperate need of significant federal support to continue to employ personnel, rebuild our statewide tourism industry, and simply survive in the months to come as they wait to be able to reopen. In many cases, not only are these institutions anticipating losses in earned revenue, but they are also projecting long term declines in charitable contributions as individuals reassess their ability to give. Already operating on razor-thin profit margins and without significant designated reserve funds or access to tax-relief benefits, our cultural institutions will be gutted. These institutions have become a part of the identity of our community and we will be lost without the wondrous creativity, educational opportunities, and cultural awe they inspire.

It's our hope the above items will provide the minimum support mechanisms required to ensure that our community still have these venerable and treasured places of learning, inspiration, and connection when better days return. Thanks again for all you do, our future, truly, is in your hands.

Sincerely,

Kamala A. Keeley
President & CEO