



December 11, 2020

Congressman Joe Courtney  
Office of Congressman Joe Courtney  
55 Main Street, Suite 250  
Norwich, CT 06360

Honorable Members of the Connecticut Delegation:

The members of the Connecticut Metro Chambers of Commerce urge Congress to act quickly to pass emergency stimulus funding to support Connecticut's small businesses and residents impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The economic situation in our state continues to deteriorate with the current spike in virus cases. Many businesses are faltering now; if nothing is done, more will do so in the coming days and weeks. Many residents have lost their jobs or have reduced opportunities to earn as businesses face COVID operational restrictions and economic limitations. We realize these are complex negotiations in Congress with many interests at stake, but we plead with you to find a way to take action now.

As Connecticut's seven metro chambers of commerce, we represent a combined membership of approximately twenty thousand businesses and organizations across the state. Although the pandemic has not impacted all businesses equally, far too many are reporting devastating economic conditions for their business and employees. Hospitality organizations, restaurants, and many small businesses are in sectors that have been hit especially hard. Long-standing businesses—critical members of our community—have been brought to bankruptcy and hundreds of thousands of our fellow residents have found themselves unemployed.

The summer brought some relief with lower infection rate and opportunities to safely operate outdoors particularly in the service sectors. However, cold weather has brought an end to outdoor dining and ushered in a new surge of the virus. As of today, the State of Connecticut has not forced most small businesses to close, but it has imposed new restrictions that severely limit economic activity. Additionally, greater impacts on these vulnerable industries are the choices that consumers are making as they see the virus rage. The bottom line is that whether there are lockdowns or not, small businesses are facing an unparalleled economic crisis.

Earlier this year, the federal Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loans were a lifeline to many of these businesses. Stimulus funds along with innovative actions and pure determination helped many of the effected businesses to survive. However, the prolonged pandemic is now seriously impacting many of our well-established businesses to the point that we fear that many will never recover. Their reserves are exhausted and more importantly their will to continue in business is depleting. They need your help now.

Stimulus funds and an extension of unemployment benefits will help these businesses and their employees weather this terrible year and, hopefully, survive to thrive again when we have defeated this virus.

We are aware of the complexity that you and your colleagues are confronted with and greatly appreciate your efforts. We are strongly recommending that you continue your efforts to work across party lines to address this national emergency to provide much needed help for our friends, neighbors colleagues and business partners. Please find a way to break through this gridlock. Our businesses and our workers are counting on you.

Thank you.

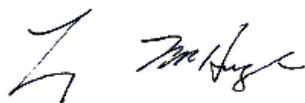
Sincerely,



Tony Sheridan  
President  
Chamber of Commerce of Eastern Connecticut



Lynn Ward  
President  
Waterbury Regional Chamber of Commerce



Larry McHugh  
President  
Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce



David Griggs  
President  
MetroHartford Alliance  
Hartford Chamber of Commerce



Cynthia Bombard  
President  
Central Connecticut Chambers of Commerce



Dan Onofrio  
President  
Bridgeport Regional Business Council



Garrett Sheehan  
President  
Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce

CC:, Senator Richard Blumenthal, Senator Chris Murphy, Congressman John Larson,  
Congresswoman Rosa DeLauro, Congressman Jim Himes, Congresswoman Jahana Hayes