

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Democratic Leader
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Democratic Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the 83 undersigned organizations that represent hundreds of thousands of businesses that employ millions of employees in various industries across the country, we write to ask you to consider improvements to [H.R. 6201](#), the Families First Coronavirus Response Act. Our suggested improvements will ensure all American workers have access to paid leave in the face of this public health crisis while also providing relief to businesses and important incentives to sustain access to employer-provided health benefits, on which nearly 180 million Americans depend.

We appreciate Congress and the Administration moving quickly to mitigate the threats COVID-19 poses to public health, our economy, and workers across the country. While the House-passed bill contains critical provisions, including expanded unemployment insurance and increased access to testing, we urge Congress to replace the paid leave mandates with a federal emergency program. The leave mandates in H.R. 6201, which requires businesses with 500 **and fewer** employees to provide 12 weeks of paid leave, presume liquidity and a tolerance for debt that simply does not exist at this time. We fear that these mandates will accelerate small and medium business closures, causing many Americans to lose employer-provided health benefits while straining the administrative and financial resources of state unemployment agencies. Although H.R. 6201 includes tax credits and Treasury Secretary Mnuchin has promised to advance business money, credits will not produce sufficient liquidity in time. We fear the government does not have the infrastructure and businesses do not have the administrative resources to access these advances in the time needed to deter business closures.

A better approach would be a public program administered by the federal government to provide compensation for COVID-19 related leave. One example is the proposed program in [H.R. 6198](#), under which the Social Security Administration (SSA) would provide financial assistance to American workers impacted by COVID-19. SSA is often one of the first agencies on the ground in natural disasters, and it has extensive experience and procedures in place for responding in emergency situations. The legislation includes multiple protections to ensure that Social Security funds are not diverted to the new emergency leave program. Other agencies, such as the U.S. Department of Labor, could also administer a program using unemployment insurance to provide compensation for leave, and we encourage Congress to also consider that agency and unemployment insurance as an option for relief.

While we understand such programs would impose significant costs on the government, this investment now will prevent far greater costs in the future, including increased unemployment and Medicaid costs as well as hardship for American workers and businesses alike. We believe a federally administered program is needed to provide critical income to workers and liquidity to businesses which will help our economy weather this storm by encouraging businesses to keep employees “on the books.” This will help ensure continuation of employer provided benefits, especially health care benefits.

On behalf of the 83 undersigned organizations, we urge you to consider this change and thank you for moving swiftly and decisively to help American workers, their families, and the businesses that employ them. We stand ready to work with you at this critical moment.

Sincerely,

Air Conditioning Contractors of America
Alabama Tire Dealers Association
Alaska Hotel & Lodging Association
American Dental Association
American Feed Industry Association
American Foundry Society
American Horticulture Industry Association
American Hotel and Lodging Association
American International Automobile Dealers Association
American Moving & Storage Association
American Staffing Association
American Veterinary Medical Association
Arkansas Hospitality Association
Arkansas State Chamber of Commerce
Asian American Hotel Owners Association
Associated Builders and Contractors
Associated Builders and Contractors South Texas Chapter
Associated Builders and Contractors Southern California Chapter
Associated Builders and Contractors Texas Gulf Coast Chapter
Associated General Contractors
Association of the Wall and Ceiling Industry
Auto Care Association
Automotive Aftermarket Association of the Mid-South, Inc.
Automotive Aftermarket Association Southeast
Automotive Oil Change Association
Building Service Contractors Association International
Capital Associated Industries (NC)
Coalition of Franchisee Associations
Council of Automotive Repair
Distribution Contractors Association

Equipment Dealers Association
Florida Restaurant and Lodging Association
Foodservice Equipment Distributors Association
Franchise Business Services
Global Cold Chain Alliance
HospitalityMaine
HR Policy Association
Independent Bakers Association
Independent Electrical Contractors
International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions
International Association of Plastics Distribution
International Council of Shopping Centers
International Foodservice Distributors Association
International Franchise Association
International Sign Association
International Warehouse Logistics Association
ISSA - The Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association
Kentucky-Indiana Automotive Wholesalers
Littler Workplace Policy Institute
Manufactured Housing Institute
Metals Service Center Institute
Moore Erection, L.P.
National Association of Electrical Distributors
National Association of Truckstop Operators
National Association of Wholesaler-Distributors
National Athletic Trainers' Association
National Automobile Dealers Association
National Community Pharmacists Association
National Demolition Association
National Franchisee Association
National Lumber and Building Material Dealers Association
National Retail Federation
National Small Business Association
National Tooling and Machining Association
New England Tire & Service Association
New Jersey Gasoline, C-Store, Automotive Association
New York State Automotive Aftermarket Association
NFIB
Ohio Equipment Distributors Association
Ormsby Insurance Agency Inc.
Power Transmission Distributors Association
Precision Machined Products Association
Precision Metalforming Association
SNAC International

Society for Human Resource Management
Southeastern Lumber Manufacturers Association
Springfield Regional Chamber
Texas Hotel & Lodging Association
Tree Care Industry Association
TRSA – The Linen, Uniform and Facility Services Association
United Equipment Dealers Association
United Motorcoach Association
Washington, Maryland, Delaware Service Station and Automotive Repair Association
Western Electrical Contractors Association