

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
The Honorable Chuck Schumer
The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
U.S. Capitol Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader McConnell, Minority Leader Schumer, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned organizations write in support of the CARES Act, and specifically Section 1102, the Paycheck Protection Program, to significantly and immediately bolster the Small Business Administration's 7(a) loan program.

As you know, the Coronavirus is a health emergency that threatens to precipitate an economic crisis. Specifically, lock-downs and cancellations necessitated by the Coronavirus are driving a sudden and sharp drop in revenues for businesses across America. While some businesses may have the working capital to manage through this downturn, many will soon find themselves with an acute cash shortfall. This will result in layoffs, and even business failure, the effects of which will cascade through the American economy. The result could be worse than the disease, itself.

The best way to mitigate this crisis is to quickly get businesses the working capital to replace lost revenues. This cash “bridge” will allow businesses to meet payroll, cover operating expenses, and stay open until demand rebounds.

The Paycheck Protection Program will leverage and enhance the existing SBA 7(a) program. By utilizing the pre-existing commercial banking system in America to make direct loans, while increasing the capacity of the program to authorize and guarantee these loans, your proposal will get needed working capital to our businesses before it is too late.

Other proposals, which rely on direct loans from the SBA and other sources, may provide longer-term capital – but will be too slow to meet this urgent need. **We know, because we are the businesses, economic development organizations, and civic groups of New Orleans and Louisiana.** We have been through the crucible of Hurricane Katrina and much more, and we know what works. Your program will.

For the good of Americans workers, businesses and the economy, the undersigned support *Section 1102 of H.R. 748, the Paycheck Protection Program* to serve businesses impacted by the Coronavirus. **Please pass this legislation immediately – every hour of waiting creates more damage to America.**

Sincerely,

Michael Hecht
President & CEO
Greater New Orleans, Inc.
Commerce

Guy Williams
President
Gulf Coast Bank & Trust
Chairman, GNO, Inc.

Maura Donahue
Partner, DonahueFavret Contractors
Board Chairman-U S Chamber of
Past Chairman, GNO, Inc.

cc: Senator Bill Cassidy
Senator John Kennedy
Congressman Ralph Abraham
Congressman Garret Graves
Congressman Clay Higgins
Congressman Mike Johnson
Congressman Cedric Richmond
Congressman Steve Scalise