

July 14, 2020

The Honorable Marco Rubio
Chairman
Senate Committee on Small Business
& Entrepreneurship
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Ben Cardin
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Small Business
& Entrepreneurship
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nydia M. Velázquez
Chairwoman
House Committee on Small Business
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steve Chabot
Ranking Member
House Committee on Small Business
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rubio, Ranking Member Cardin, Chairwoman Velázquez and Ranking Member Chabot:

As the country starts to slowly and partially reopen in certain jurisdictions, one critical part of the economy is still effectively shuttered and is at risk of near total collapse: independent music venues. These venues were the first to close and will be the last to fully reopen. We stand with the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) and its 2,000 independent venue and promoter members across the country, **urging you to support The RESTART Act (S. 3814/H.R. 7481)** led by Senators Todd Young and Michael Bennet and Representatives Jared Golden and Mike Kelly, and other like-minded proposals that tailor PPP to work for shuttered businesses that have no revenue, high overhead and no clear timeline for reopening.

With zero revenue and the overwhelming overhead of rent, mortgage, utilities, taxes, and insurance, **90% of independent venues report that if the shutdown lasts six months and there's no federal assistance, they will never reopen again.**

Beloved venues in all corners of America are already shutting down forever. Each venue's closing is accompanied by the reality that communities are losing their local economic and cultural hubs. Their absence will be sorely felt; for every \$1 spent on a ticket at small venues, a total of \$12 in economic activity is generated within communities at restaurants, hotels, taxis, and retail establishments. Keeping independent venues alive is a benefit not just for fans, employees, and artists; it's an investment in communities across America.

The ominous reality is venues will be shutdown indefinitely, likely extending deep into 2021, as these gathering places which host live music and comedy are in the final stage of nearly every jurisdictions' reopening plans; **many are not permitted to open until there's a vaccine or cure.** The ability to open at partial capacity is not economically feasible for most. Rents, utilities, payroll, taxes, insurance, and artist pay are fixed costs; they are not on a sliding scale that matches the capacity venues are permitted to host.

Under normal circumstances, these mom-and-pop entrepreneurial businesses fuel about \$9 billion a year into local economies throughout the U.S. Due to the national routing of most tours, this industry will not recover until the entire country is open at 100% capacity. NIVA members need assistance in order to survive until that day. This relief is critical for our nation's artists, too, as they derive 75% of their income from touring. They will need a place to play – and not in boarded-up buildings – when the world opens up again. These independent venues are the unassuming, unsung heroes of the music industry where developing artists get their start, hone their craft, and build a following. Without these venues, there are no arena acts or major festivals and the music economy will be in further peril.

Before it's too late, Congress must take quick and specific action to address the unique circumstances of this still-shuttered component of the small business sector. We are asking you to support NIVA's request for assistance so these venues can live long enough to reopen when it's safe -- and once again serve as the economic engines that fuel local economies.

Respectfully,

A2IM (American Association of Independent Music)

Amazon Music

ASCAP

BMI

DiMA

Etix

Eventbrite

Future of Music Coalition

Music Artists Coalition

Music Business Association

RIAA

See Tickets

SESAC

Sirius XM + Pandora

Sony Music Entertainment

SoundExchange

Spotify

Universal Music Group

Warner Music Group

YouTube

cc: Members of the Senate and House