

MUSIC INDUSTRY GIANTS URGE CONGRESS TO SAVE INDEPENDENT LIVE MUSIC AND COMEDY VENUES BY PASSING THE RESTART ACT

SPOTIFY LEADS LETTER TO CONGRESS IN SUPPORT OF NIVA AS TIME IS RUNNING OUT

1 Million Emails Have Been Sent to Congress, Imploring Legislators To #SaveOurStages

July 14, 2020 — Music industry giants including* **Amazon Music, BMI, Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), Sony Music Entertainment, Sirius XM + Pandora, Spotify, Universal Music Group, and Warner Music Group** have stepped up to lend their support for the bipartisan RESTART Act (S. 3814/H.R. 7481), led by Senators Todd Young (R-IN) and Michael Bennet (D-CO) and Representatives Jared Golden (D-ME-2) and Michael Kelly (R-PA-16). The RESTART Act is tailored to assist businesses that are long-shuttered with dramatic loss of revenue, high overhead and no clear timeframe for fully reopening. The National Independent Venues Association (NIVA), representing 2,000 U.S. independent venues, promoters and festivals in every state and Washington, D.C., sees the RESTART Act as its last chance to keep the nation's venues alive amidst a pandemic shutdown with no end in sight. When surveyed, 90% of NIVA members said that if the shutdown lasts six months or longer and there's no emergency federal assistance, they will be forced to close forever.

[The letter to Congress states:](#)

“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, 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.

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 is critical for our nation's artists, too, as they derive 75% of their income from touring.”

While many businesses have been able to reopen in a limited capacity while adhering to the government's adjustments to COVID guidelines, this is not the case for venues. Often there is no ability to open at all, or they're permitted to open only partially, which creates even greater economic loss than remaining shut. These businesses continue to be overwhelmed with overheads of rent, mortgage, utilities, taxes and insurance, and many have already made the difficult decision to close their doors forever, meaning communities are rapidly losing important local economic and cultural hubs. However, if these businesses get the support to see them through when they can fully reopen, they will be part of the economic renewal across the nation, as a study from Chicago showed that for every \$1 in ticket sales spent at a small venue, \$12 of additional economic activity is generated, benefiting area businesses such as restaurants, bars, retail shops, and hotels.'

"The COVID-19 crisis has forced independent venues to close their doors through no fault of their own and with much uncertainty about when they will be able to return to business as usual," **said Sen. Todd Young (R-Ind.)**. "Our *RESTART Act* would provide the hardest-hit businesses, including entertainment venues, with a critical lifeline needed to keep the lights on until they can safely open again for employees, fans, and artists."

"While some small businesses are able to safely operate at lower capacity, for many independent music venues, partial reopening just isn't an economically viable option. As a result, many music venues are rapidly reaching the point of no return. Our *RESTART Act* would allow venues and other hard-hit small businesses to receive loans that are mostly forgivable for the firms that have suffered the largest revenue declines, with a long runway to repay the remaining portion of the loan so they can stay afloat until it's safe to reopen," **said Sen. Michael Bennet (D-CO)**. "We're grateful to the music industry for their support of *RESTART*. I urge my colleagues in Congress to include this bipartisan proposal in the next COVID-19 relief package to save the music economy and the many other hard-hit small businesses across the country."

"Many small businesses, including many music venues, have now either exhausted their PPP funds or never applied to the program because it didn't quite work for them," **said Rep. Jared Golden (D-ME-2)**. "These businesses are still barely hanging on. Congress must confront the fact that our current recession isn't going to magically disappear and take action. The PPP was successful, but it was an emergency measure. We must address its flaws and learn from it to help more businesses and save more jobs going forward. The bipartisan legislation I've introduced with Republican Congressman Mike Kelly builds on the PPP to create the *RESTART* program. *RESTART* will provide the hardest-hit small businesses with more flexible relief they can use on things like rent, contractor payments, and PPE, and the forgivable loans will last up to a year. Based on the feedback I've been receiving directly from Maine small businesses, the *RESTART* program is the best path forward to keep local businesses like music venues above water and keep Mainers employed."

"Building on the success of the PPP program, the *RESTART Act* will help the hardest hit small businesses and nonprofits keep their doors open and ensure more Americans can get back to work.

Providing greater flexibility and longer-term loans will assist more job creators survive this pandemic and resume normal business operations. It's a win-win for our economy, U.S. small businesses and American workers," **said Rep. Mike Kelly (R-PA-16).**

"Many of the critical revenue streams that creative professionals in the music industry depend upon to earn a living, like live shows and touring have disappeared in the wake of COVID-19. Independent music venues have been particularly hard hit, and it is essential that these small businesses receive the necessary relief in order to reopen their doors. The RESTART Act is a crucial step to helping revive these cultural hubs. Spotify applauds the leadership of Senators Bennet and Young and Representatives Kelly and Golden, and urges Congress to swiftly take action to save our stages," **said Head of Global Affairs & Chief Legal Officer of Spotify, Horacio Gutierrez.**

Support for NIVA and The Restart Act has been overwhelming and this latest pledge shows just how important venues and live music are to the entire live music ecosystem. It aims to further highlight just how dire the situation that many independent venues, promoters, and festivals face after the initial round of PPP funding failed to address the specific needs of this industry..

- **On June 18**, more than 600 of the nation's most cherished musical artists, including Dave Grohl and Foo Fighters, Mavis Staples, Lady Gaga, André 3000, Coldplay, Willie Nelson, Billie Eilish, Gary Clark Jr, Robert Plant of Led Zeppelin, Miranda Lambert, Billy Joel, Earth Wind & Fire, Kacey Musgraves, Leon Bridges, Wyclef Jean, and Bon Iver, along with beloved comedians such as Jay Leno, Tiffany Haddish, Jeff Foxworthy, Jerry Seinfeld, and Tig Notaro, issued [a letter to Congress](#) asking legislators to provide urgent financial support for independent venues and promoters in the U.S.
- **On June 9**, NIVA released a [Fact Sheet and Policy Ask Document](#) which stipulates what will be required to save the industry from certain collapse.
- **On May 14**, 93 Members of Congress submitted [a letter to Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy](#), outlining the very unique and dire challenges faced by independent venues and promoters across the U.S, urging them to support actions that benefit these mom and pop businesses and the cultural fabric they provide.
- **In May** NIVA launched a campaign titled [SaveOurStages](#) that has garnered a huge wave of support among citizens across the U.S., so far resulting in more than **1 million emails to Congress asking them to #SaveOurStages**. More than [1,100 artists](#) have supported the mission, as well.
- **On April 22**, NIVA submitted [a letter to Congress](#) asking them to modify the existing PPP Loan Program by including a separate allotment of funds for businesses that were completely closed in accordance with government-mandated social distancing guidelines.

"This spring we reported that if the shutdown lasts six months and there's no suitable federal assistance, 90% of independent venues will never reopen again," said Dayna Frank, NIVA president and

president of First Avenue Productions in Minneapolis. “Now that we’re in the middle of July this puts us at the edge of collapse. Venues are already folding and with every day that passes with no government support, the risk heightens. The stark reality is If RESTART doesn’t become law before Congress goes out for recess in August, this industry will collapse. We’re incredibly thankful for the efforts of Congressmen Bennet, Young, Kelly and Golden to bring The RESTART Act from a discussion to reality; it’s truly the only lifeline our industry has right now and we are in full support of its adoption,” said Dayna Frank, NIVA President and President of First Avenue Productions in Minneapolis.

*The letter was signed by the following music industry leaders:

- A2IM (American Association of Independent Music)
- Amazon Music
- ASCAP
- BMI
- DiMA
- Etix
- Eventbrite
- Future of Music Coalition
- Music Arts Coalition
- Music Business Association
- Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA)
- See Tickets
- SESAC
- Sirius XM/Pandora
- Sony Music Entertainment
- SoundExchange
- Spotify
- Universal Music Group
- Warner Music Group
- YouTube

About NIVA: Formed at the onset of the Covid-19 shutdown, the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), now represents more than 2,000 members in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. These independent venues and promoters were the first to close and will be the last to fully reopen. NIVA’s mission is to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live music venues, promoters and festivals throughout the United States.

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