

July 14, 2020

The Honorable Benjamin L. Cardin
509 Hart SOB
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Anthony Brown
1323 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Steny Hoyer
1705 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen
110 Hart SOB
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kweisi Mfume
2163 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David Trone
1213 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Andy Harris
2334 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C.A. Dutch
Ruppersberger
2206 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable John P. Sarbanes
2370 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jamie Raskin
412 Cannon HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Maryland Congressional Delegation members:

I write to you today on behalf of the myriad local businesses that have been devastated by COVID-19 to request your support for the RESTART Act (S.3814, H.R. 7481), which would provide a crucial injection of aid and flexibility to Maryland's most vulnerable businesses because they are entirely shuttered, with no revenue, all of their overhead and no visibility into when they can return to normal operations.

Small businesses are the backbone of Maryland and the nation's economy, stimulating local growth, employment, and community. Merriweather Post Pavilion, a cornerstone of Maryland's live entertainment industry, supports more than 950 statewide jobs through its operations and attributable visitor spending. Normally, those jobs provide an estimated \$20.3 million in annual labor income, and Merriweather provides nearly \$69 million a year in statewide economic activity, contributing \$3.2 million to in-state vendors each year, with an estimated \$1.9 million in annual revenues for the State through income, sales, and admissions and amusement taxes. Small businesses throughout the state and the country are all interconnected, and their failure impacts the success of all.

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is meant to provide a lifeline for businesses through the COVID-19 crisis, but as originally implemented was infeasible for those like Merriweather Post Pavilion that have completely shuttered and see no path to an accelerated reopening or recovery. Merriweather was considered "too big" since it has more than 500 workers, mostly part-time. Companies that serve large audiences or for which a partial reopening would result in a counterproductive net loss are incapable of operating at this time, yet they continue to accrue high overhead costs with zero revenue. The RESTART Act finances the equivalent of six months' worth of payroll, benefits, and fixed operating costs needed to carry these businesses through to the end of the year.

Businesses must be able to allocate funds in an individualized manner, as every situation is different. The RESTART Act allows for more flexibility with loan proceeds and loan forgiveness with no minimums on the

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percentage dedicated to any one expense, in addition to a more practical 7-year payback schedule wherein principal payments are not required for 2 years and interest payments are not due for the first 12 months.

Small businesses are known for their resilience and determination in the face of adversity, but never before have they faced a mountain as steep as the current public health and economic crisis. Creative adaptations to their business models can only go so far, and many are in desperate need of government relief. Passing the RESTART Act is crucial to the health of Maryland and this nation's economy, and is a necessary step in helping to protect tax-paying businesses while ensuring future revenue streams and opportunities for growth as we prepare for a potential nationwide economic contraction.

I hope that you will continue to advocate for comprehensive economic relief measures as our businesses navigate this unparalleled hardship.

Thank you for your attention and I urge your strong support for this critically important legislation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Leonardo McClarty". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Leonardo" being more prominent than the last name "McClarty".

Leonardo McClarty, CCE
President/CEO, Howard County Chamber

CC: Jean Parker, Merriweather Post Pavilion