July 23, 2020

Dear Senator Baldwin, Senator Johnson, Congressman Kind:

I am writing to urge your support of the inclusion of direct assistance to the live entertainment industry in the next round of federal COVID-19 economic recovery legislation. The RESTART Act (S.3814) is the first and only bipartisan legislation to provide relief for small and midsized live entertainment businesses through the rest of the year. This legislation is imperative to the live entertainment industry, which has been particularly devastated by the pandemic, due to the need of public support to ensure its long-term survival.

Live entertainment is an economic engine for many communities in our state. In Wisconsin, venues like The Pablo Center at the Confluence, The Grand (Chippewa Valley Theatre Guild), The Metro, The Plus, The Mabel Tainter, The Blue Ox Festival, Country Jam, Eaux Claires, Country Fest, Rock Fest, The Lakely, Pine Hollow and the Sounds Like Summer Concert Series in Eau Claire, WI, bring jobs and tourists to the area, and are an important piece of our local economy and culture. However, the industry has faced many challenges and will continue to do so in the coming months.

The live entertainment industry relies on packing large crowds into venues, making them an early victim of social distancing protocols. The industry was among the first to close, and will likely be the last to reopen. With already-thin profit margins and the logistical difficulties of tour planning, operating at limited capacity is simply not an option.

Because of the pandemic, the live entertainment industry will continue to struggle for a prolonged period of time. Wisconsin cannot afford to lose these important economic and cultural staples. I urge you to include direct assistance to the live entertainment industry through the RESTART Act in the next round of federal economic stimulus, as well as support the Save Our Stages Act (S. 4258). Please contact the Pablo Center Executive Director, Jason Anderson, 715.471.6136, if you wish to discuss this further.

Respectfully,

Luke Hanson,
Executive Director