August 4, 2020

Leader McConnell,

As Congress continues negotiations for a fourth Coronavirus relief package, I wanted to make you aware of GLI’s support for three proposals that our members view as critical for supporting Greater Louisville’s economic recovery.

- GLI supports efforts to establish a program through which the federal government assists consumers in covering the costs of wired and wireless broadband internet expenses. With so many families relying on the internet for work and school, ensuring broad access to the internet is critical. Survey data has shown that 87 percent of Americans view internet access as important to them during the COVID-19 crisis, while 34 percent have concerns about their ability to pay the costs of internet access. Legislative proposals, such as establishing an internet voucher program for qualifying households, would complement the important work already being carried out by internet service providers through the FCC’s Keep Americans Connected Pledge.
- On behalf of the arts and entertainment industries in Louisville, and specifically Kentucky Performing Arts, GLI supports inclusion of the Save our Stages Act (SOS) in the COVID relief bill. This proposal is specific to the arts and entertainment industry - an industry vital to Louisville’s economic vitality. Before COVID, Kentucky Performing Arts (The Kentucky Center, Brown Theatre, and Old Forester's Paristown Hall) directly contributed more than $15.8 million to Louisville's economy, with an additional $10.5 million spent by patrons annually. SOS would provide grants to eligible organizations that meet appropriate requirements. Given that this industry will be among the last to come back from the impact of this pandemic, it is critical that they have resources to not only survive the shut-down but are also financially equipped to re-open.
- Finally, GLI supports the RESTART Act, which would create more flexibility in the Paycheck Protection Program for businesses that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. GLI was supportive of the Paycheck Protection Program Flexibility Act and believes the RESTART Act would continue the important work started by that legislation.

GLI greatly appreciates your leadership on the CARES Act and HEALS Act, and we urge you and your colleagues in Congress to take the proposals listed above into consideration.

Sincerely,

Sarah Davasher-Wisdom
President & CEO
Greater Louisville Inc.