

CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR SAVE OUR STAGES ACT CONTINUES TO GROW
THE BI-PARTISAN RELIEF BILL TO ASSIST INDEPENDENT VENUES THROUGH THE PANDEMIC
NOW HAS 147 CO-SPONSORS

Sept. 8, 2020 – Since the **Save Our Stages Act** (S. 4258, H.R. 7481) was introduced in July, bipartisan Congressional support has continued to grow - even through the August Recess. To date, 147 U.S. Senators and Representatives have signed on as co-sponsors of the legislation, which is aimed at providing relief to independent live venues, promoters and festivals across the nation that have been shuttered with no revenue and high overhead since March with no timeline for reopening. When asked if the shutdown were to last six months or longer with no meaningful federal assistance, 90% of [The National Independent Venue Association \(NIVA\)](#) members said they would be forced to fold forever.

Introduced in the Senate by Senators John Cornyn (R-TX) and Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and in the House by Representatives Peter Welch (D-VT) and Roger Williams (R-TX-25), the **Save Our Stages Act** provides vital support for independent live music venues that have lost nearly 100% of their revenue since the pandemic began in March, yet have enormous fixed overhead with rent / mortgages, insurance, taxes and utilities still due.

“Our members expected resolution in July and have held out past their breaking points borrowing or scraping together anything they could until Congress makes a decision, but there is no further to go,” Dayna Frank, president of NIVA and CEO of First Avenue Productions in Minneapolis. “Businesses will be closed, and homes will be lost if Congress doesn’t take immediate action. We need action now.”

“Texas is home to a number of historic and world-class small entertainment venues, many of which remain shuttered after being the first businesses to close,” said Sen. Cornyn. “The culture around Texas dance halls and live music has shaped generations, and this legislation would give them the resources to reopen their doors and continue educating and inspiring Texans beyond the coronavirus pandemic.”

“Our local concert halls, theatres, and places of entertainment, like First Avenue in Minneapolis where Prince famously performed, have inspired generations by showcasing extraordinary talent,” Sen. Klobuchar said. “This legislation would help ensure that small entertainment venues can continue to operate and serve our communities for years to come.”

Since the launch of <https://www.saveourstages.com>, nearly 2 million letters of support have been sent by fans and constituents in all 50 states. In June, more than 600 artists – including Dave Grohl of Foo Fighters, Mavis Staples, Lady Gaga, André 3000, Coldplay, Willie Nelson, Jerry Seinfeld and Billie Eilish – [sent a letter to Congress](#) advocating on behalf of NIVA.

“Independent live music and entertainment venues help bring together and entertain Americans across the country,” said Rep. Welch. “Any music fan or performer knows that a livestream is just not the same as a live concert. Unfortunately, the PPP and other federal aid programs simply do not work for live music venues that cannot reopen until we stop virus transmission. I am pleased that more than 100 members across the political spectrum recognize the importance of these venues, and have cosponsored this bill to make sure venues get the support they need to survive the pandemic so they are ready to host all of us at a show in the future.”

“Over the last few months, I’ve toured numerous live music venues across the 25th District and have met with owners, managers, promoters and artists who are in desperate need of relief as they have been uniquely affected by the government’s actions during COVID-19, especially here in the Austin area. Unlike some businesses on the road to recovery, music venues that have been cultural staples for generations will continue to bear the negative impacts of the pandemic for the foreseeable future,” said Rep. Williams. “The Save Our Stages Act is a lifeline for this industry and I’m proud to lead the fight in Congress on their behalf, now with the support of over 100 of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle. It’s vital we pass this legislation in the near future so these pillars in our Central Texas communities can once again reopen their doors.”

The proposed legislation would provide Small Business Administration grants for independent live venue operators, promoters and festivals affected by COVID-19 stay-at-home or limited capacity orders. These grants would provide at least six months of financial support to keep venues afloat, pay employees, and preserve a critical economic sector for communities across the country.

Without this support, venues are facing permanent closure. This would have a dramatic negative impact on neighborhoods across the country, since for every \$1 spent on a ticket at small venues, a total of \$12 in economic activity is generated within communities on restaurants, hotels, taxis, and retail establishments. Unfortunately, the Payroll Protection Program does not work for this industry, as the vast majority of employees have had to be furloughed.

As the nation awaits the next COVID Relief legislation, venues are already disappearing. Michael Berry is just one former venue owner whose nightmare became reality with the closure of Republic Country Club in Stafford, Texas. “Please know that if there were a way to save the place, I would have done it.” He said. “I’ve begged, borrowed, and liquidated everything I have. In the end, this awful virus and the reaction to it was too much for us to weather.”

Rob Mercurio, a touring musician with Galactic and venue co-owner of Tipitina’s in New Orleans said, “The margins are so thin. We were succeeding, but just barely, over our first year and a half of owning it. Not being able to hold shows, it’s become increasingly impossible for us to make ends meet. We had a little bit to make it through, but it’s really going to hit the fan in October.”

Save Our Stages (SOS) Act Senate Co-Sponsors (35):

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Garcia, Jesus G. "Chuy" [IL-4]
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About NIVA

Formed at the onset of the COVID-19 shutdown, National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), now represents more than 2,800 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.

NIVA Media Contact: Audrey Fix Schaefer, audrey@930.com