May 21, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

We write to bring your attention to challenges facing the live entertainment industry and to ask for targeted legislative action as Congress works on additional economic relief legislation in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Live event venues were among the first to close as COVID-19 spread across the country, and they are likely to be among the last to reopen. Concerts and live events may not be possible until a vaccine is readily available to the public, which could be many months away, if not longer. Until that time, live event venues will remain shuttered, leaving employees without jobs and businesses without revenue. The continued closures will also impact the numerous contractors, suppliers, and business partners that support the live entertainment industry in our states.

Each year, thousands of independent venues host millions of events, staffed by hundreds of thousands of employees, and attended by hundreds of millions of concertgoers across all walks of life. These entertainment hubs are important economic multipliers for our local economies, generating millions in tax revenue and providing jobs in our communities. The business generated by this industry also supports countless neighboring businesses such as restaurants, hotels, and retail.

Unfortunately, even once venues are permitted to reopen, it will take months for the industry to return to usual schedules. Tour artists have an intricate and complicated process of planning, scheduling, and tour routing, making a quick restart near impossible. While necessary to prevent the spread of COVID 19, new capacity limitations and other restrictions could inhibit the live entertainment industry’s ability to recover fully for some time. We are concerned that even if these entertainment venues are able to withstand the shutdowns, they will not be economically viable operating at 25 or 50 percent occupancy.

Congress has taken swift action to support the economy, but the programs we have enacted provide little relief to independent venues. Short-term disruption assistance has provided a lifeline for millions of Americans, but businesses that face prolonged closure also need help. Without assistance targeted to their unique situation, venues, artists, and our local communities face an unprecedented crisis. We support providing government funding, tax relief measures, and assistance to manage mortgage, rent, and other debt burdens for mom and pop venues across the country.

These venues support the economies of communities across the country, are a crucial component of the music industry’s ecosystem, and serve as incubators and launch pads for the most popular
talent in the world. We can provide a vital lifeline for these iconic venues that are so central to the social, cultural, and economic fabric of so many of our communities. This industry is not going to make it without our help.

Thank you for your consideration of this request, and we look forward to working with you to provide necessary relief to live venue operators across the country.

Sincerely,

John Cornyn  
United States Senator

Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator

Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

Jon Tester  
United States Senator

Kevin Cramer  
United States Senator

Kyrsten Sinema  
United States Senator

Jerry Moran  
United States Senator

Ron Wyden  
United States Senator

Cory Gardner  
United States Senator

Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator
Marsha Blackburn
United States Senator

Steven Daines
United States Senator

Susan Collins
United States Senator

Lindsey Graham
United States Senator

Bill Cassidy, M.D.
United States Senator

Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator

Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senator

Gary C. Peters
United States Senator

Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator

Martin Heinrich
United States Senator
Pat Roberts
United States Senator

John Boozman
United States Senator

Robert Menendez
United States Senator

Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator

/s/
Jack Reed
United States Senator

/s/
Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator

/s/
Sherrod Brown
United States Senator

Christopher A. Coons
United States Senator

Debbie Stabenow
United States Senator

/s/
Jacky Rosen
United States Senator

/s/
Michael Bennet
United States Senator

/s/
Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator

Doug Jones  
United States Senator

Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator

Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator

Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator

Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator

/s/ Angus S. King, Jr.  
United States Senator

/s/ Tom Udall  
United States Senator

Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator

Cc: Chairman Richard Shelby  
Cc: Ranking Member Patrick Leahy