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Elections
Environmental Conservation
Higher Education

THE SENATE
STATE OF NEW YORK



RACHEL MAY
SENATOR, 53RD DISTRICT

Albany Office:
Legislative Office Building
Room 803
Albany, New York 12247
(518) 455-2838

District Office:
State Office Building
Room 805
333 East Washington St.
Syracuse, New York 13202
(315) 478-8745
may@nysenate.gov

The Honorable Members of New York's Congressional Delegation
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Rep. _____,

Thank you for your leadership in these times of uncertainty and crisis. The first three relief and emergency aid packages have provided critical assistance to working families, health care systems, and small businesses. We are grateful for these steps, as they will provide immediate relief for highly impacted New Yorkers. The full scale and impact of COVID-19 are still revealing themselves, but we know that it is wreaking unprecedented damage on every aspect of our society.

As state legislators, we are doing everything in our power to sustain New York's robust response to this public health emergency, and we are thankful for federal assistance. Like every state, however, New York does not have the resources to respond effectively – only the federal government has the resources to fully sustain our state through the end of this crisis. In this spirit, we write to you with three requests to keep in mind as you consider a fourth phase of relief and emergency aid.

- **Aid to States and Localities:** The full impact of the crisis on state budgets remains unknown, but reasonable estimates suggest that New York State will experience a \$10-\$15 billion hole in its budget this year, and the cost to counties and NYC will also be huge. The phase 3 relief legislation opened many billions of dollars to critical industries; we strongly urge you to fight for a similar scale of assistance for state and local governments in phase 4. These funds should address both the continued response to COVID-19 (including robust testing) *and* provide direct monetary support for state and local governments to remain fiscally solvent in the wake of our economic freeze.
- **Aid to Schools and Students:** The CARES Act included \$30.75 billion for educational stabilization funds to help K-12 and higher education institutions engaged in coronavirus-related activities and adaptation. This is a welcome first step, but the need to ensure robust funding for our schools and supports for our students will go far beyond the current moment. We know that the sudden shift to distance education is straining our education systems and threatening to leave many students behind. We urge you to advocate for a significant investment in phase 4 to sustain public schools that will be heavily drained by declining state budgets. We also urge you to fight for an investment in ensuring students have genuine access

to high-speed internet for the duration of the current crisis by expanding access to hotspots and other technology to connect low-income students and those living in rural areas.

- **Aid to Libraries and Cultural Institutions:** Just as we support small businesses and other nonprofits, we believe that we should also be supporting critical cultural institutions. The CARES Act contains moderate investments in the National Endowments for the Arts and Humanities, as well as funding for museums, but we urge you to provide significantly more support for public libraries and cultural institutions. In New York State, arts institutions from Broadway to the Everson Museum in Syracuse generate more than \$100 billion in economic activity annually. Libraries in every corner of the state offer one of the last genuine public spaces with a range of services available to communities. When we emerge from this crisis, we must ensure that our cultural institutions remain viable and available. Phase 4 must contain significant assistance for these entities, especially those smaller institutions less likely to be able to weather this storm.

Thank you again for your tireless work on behalf of every New Yorker. We hope that you will consider these urgent concerns as Congress develops a phase 4 relief and emergency aid package. Significant investments will be necessary to support our states and localities, schools and students, and cultural institutions during this crisis and ensure their success when we turn the corner on this emergency. As always, we stand ready to provide any assistance we can on behalf of our constituents.

Sincerely,

Rachel May
State Senator 53rd District