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September 21, 2020

Senator Chuck Schumer  
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Rep. Anthony Brindisi  
Rep. Yvette Clarke  
Rep. Alexandria Ocasio  
Cortez  
Rep. Antonio Delgado  
Rep. Eliot Engel  
Rep. Adriano Espaillat  
Rep. Brian Higgins  
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Rep. Carolyn Maloney  
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Rep. Joseph Morelle  
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Rep. Tom Reed  
Rep. Kathleen Rice  
Rep. Max Rose  
Rep. José Serrano  
Rep. Elise Stefanik  
Rep. Thomas Suozzi  
Rep. Paul Tonko  
Rep. Nydia Velázquez  
Rep. Lee Zeldin

United States House of Representatives  
Ford House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Members of the New York Congressional Delegation:

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has been painfully felt across every industry but performing arts and live venues were among the first to close and will be among the last to reopen.

We write to you today expressing our full support for targeted assistance for the performing arts industry as provided in the Save Our Stages Act, (S. 4258 and H.R. 7806), which would ensure the survival of performing arts venues across the country, and we urge you to include this important assistance in any forthcoming Covid-19 Stimulus.

As you know, not only are performing arts a critical part of our identity as New Yorkers, they are important economic generators and integral to our fiscal health. New York's cultural sector is a tremendous draw for tourists from every corner of the world, creating powerful economic multipliers for complementary industries like hotels, restaurants, transportation, and retail.

The U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis reports that arts and cultural production contributed more than \$800 billion of economic activity to the US economy in 2016, which equates to 4.3 percent of the nation's GDP — a larger share of the economy than transportation and agriculture.

Darkened stages are perhaps felt most acutely in New York City, where Broadway accounts for over \$14 billion per year in economic activity and sells more tickets than New York City's sports teams. Additionally, the many independent venues across the five boroughs have been appropriately praised for leading neighborhood revitalizations, creating the City's eclectic cultural vibrancy, and inspiring artists and patrons alike.

New York City's entertainment venues, including Broadway and other ticketed events, are among the hardest hit sectors during COVID-19, experiencing 70 percent employment reductions between February and June.

Similar impacts are felt in communities throughout New York State where downtown theaters and music halls pack nearby restaurants, bars, and shops pre-show and hotels afterward. The National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) estimates that for every \$1 spent on a ticket at a local venue, \$12 of economic activity was generated for area businesses. NIVA has also stated that its membership, including 260 venues throughout every region of New York State, has experienced 90% aggregate revenue loss, with a similar percentage of venue operators deeply concerned they may never reopen their doors.

Further compounding these challenges, performance venues are not part of many states', including New York's, phased reopening plan, leaving them among the few industries still experiencing employment declines since the initial Covid-19 shutdown.

We fully appreciate your efforts in funding the CARES Act that has benefited New Yorkers in countless ways, however the aid package has shown a gap in support for theaters, live music venues, and other performing arts spaces that have been completely shuttered and require long-term support and flexibility. We are deeply concerned that the extended closure of performing arts venues and operations will lead to performers and workers leaving the industry, creating a ripple effect to other dependent industries, and jeopardizing New York's economic recovery.

Make no mistake, the arts will play a central role in our economic recovery, as they have so many times before. After September 11th, Broadway, the I LOVE NY Campaign, and the performing arts community were instrumental in bringing people and dollars back to New York. The arts have the power to break down barriers, and throughout history the arts community has served as a vehicle for social justice. The arts and culture can be a healing force during difficult times, and during the COVID-19 pandemic so many of us have turned to the arts for relief from the harsh realities of the last few months. We cannot abandon an industry that has given so much to so many New Yorkers.

It is critical that performing arts industries receive the assistance they need to be able to open their doors when it is safe to do so. We ask that by supporting the Save Our Stages Act and providing targeted assistance to the performing arts industry, you provide the lifeline needed to retain millions of jobs and preserve New York's social and cultural vitality for generations to come.

Thank you for your continued work towards New York's recovery during these difficult times.

Sincerely



José M. Serrano, 29<sup>th</sup> SD  
Chair of the Senate Committee on Cultural Affairs,  
Tourism, Parks and Recreation



Timothy M. Kennedy, 63<sup>rd</sup> SD



Liz Krueger, 28<sup>th</sup> SD



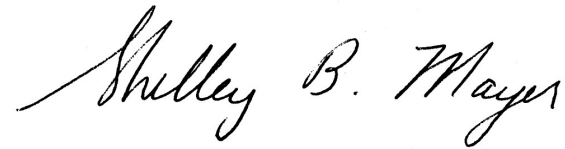
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Monica R. Martinez, 3<sup>rd</sup> SD



Michael Gianaris, 12<sup>th</sup> SD



Shelley Mayer, 37<sup>th</sup> SD



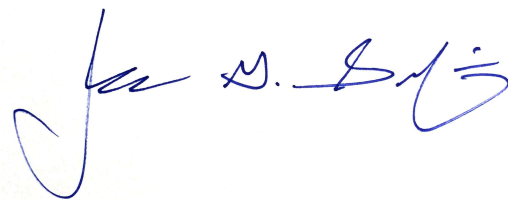
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Brad Hoylman, 27<sup>th</sup> SD



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