

NEW YORK  
STATE  
SENATE



SENATOR MICHAEL N. GIANARIS  
12<sup>TH</sup> DISTRICT  
DEPUTY MAJORITY LEADER

November 13, 2020

Hon. Joseph Biden  
President-Elect of the United States  
1401 Constitution Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear President-Elect Biden,

Congratulations on your victory! The election results were incredibly welcome by a nation that has suffered greatly over the last four years. I write now regarding the financial burden experienced by renters and small businesses in need of critical assistance as we face a second wave of COVID-19 in New York City.

As you are undoubtedly aware, the nation is still dealing with an out of control pandemic and New Yorkers in particular have suffered immeasurable losses of lives and livelihoods, incurring utter devastation to themselves, their families and their businesses.

Over the past 9 months, New Yorkers rallied to fight back against this devastating virus, often at great sacrifice. While New Yorkers flattened the curve at great personal and financial pain, under the failed leadership of President Trump, the virus quickly grew out of control. Currently, there are record high hospitalizations each day, overwhelmed health care systems, surging unemployment, shuttered businesses, mounting debt and unnecessary loss of life all without any apparent plan from the White House. Not coincidentally, we are now experiencing the start of what appears to be a second wave in New York City — one that we can ill-afford as we have yet to fully recover from the first wave in the Spring.

As New York City enters a new phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, New Yorkers will once again be called upon to successfully grapple with the virus by wearing masks, social distancing and by following the guidance of medical professionals who suggest limitations on indoor gatherings in places such as restaurants. This comes at a great cost as these limitations will likely result in partial or full closings which are devastating to these businesses, the people who manage and work at them, and their families. New Yorkers have always risen to the challenge of caring for each other when needed and this time will be no different. We can do much by and for ourselves but, we cannot do it all alone.



As we face this unprecedented national crisis, we must start working towards a solution that includes significant financial relief for New York City's struggling renters and businesses who have been irreparably harmed by the pandemic. We need robust and targeted residential and commercial rent relief, ideally in the form of rent cancellation and forgiveness. Access to no/low interest loans would also be a great help, so that people can remain in their homes and maintain their places of business until they can get back on their feet. Just as we must care for one another's physical health and safety, we must also take these measures because caring for one another's mental health and economic security is just as critical. A renter or small business lost because they can no longer afford rent represents far more than real estate balance sheet losses. It's a loss to the individual and the community that will never be the same. We have no time to spare.

Accordingly, I respectfully urge you and your transition team to strongly consider creating a plan to provide real and significant economic relief to those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic as soon as possible as time is of the essence and families and communities could be affected irreparably.

I look forward to speaking with you about this in greater detail as soon as possible as well as the many other important issues facing our nation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Gianaris". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Gianaris".

Senator Michael Gianaris  
Deputy Majority Leader, New York State Senate