



CITY HALL
HOBOKEN, NEW JERSEY

March 16, 2020

Hon. Robert Menendez
529 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Hon. Cory Booker
717 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D. C. 20510

Hon. Albio Sires
2268 Rayburn HOB
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Senator Menendez, Senator Booker, and Representative Sires:

As you may be aware, the City of Hoboken was the first in the country to mandate the closure of bars and restaurants in order to enhance social distancing and help slow the spread of the COVID-19 virus. Multiple states and cities across the country have already implemented similar restrictions, and I am certain that others will as well in the days ahead.

While I believe this decision will save lives, I also know that our small businesses and their employees are suffering. Business owners fear that an extended closure will make it difficult if not impossible to remain in business. Their employees - many without benefits - don't have the option of working from home, and they are fearful. We need the help and resources of the federal government now more than ever.

I applaud you and your colleagues for quickly passing the bipartisan emergency relief package for free coronavirus testing, paid sick, family and medical leave, unemployment insurance, and food assistance programs. I am encouraged that there is already a discussion about a third legislative package, and I urge you in the strongest terms to include meaningful relief for both our small business and their employees, many of whom could be out of work for prolonged periods of time.

We are in uncharted waters, trying to navigate through an unprecedented global crisis. What is clear is that this is a time where we must pursue bold solutions to give our businesses a fighting chance.

Thank you for your dedicated service and leadership. Please do not hesitate to reach out to me if I can be of assistance in any way.

Very truly yours,

Ravi S. Bhalla
Mayor, City of Hoboken