



Dear Senators Booker & Menendez,

We hope you, and your family and friends, remain safe and healthy. We know that you, like so many of our representatives, are working tirelessly to help mitigate the spread of the virus—and keep our New Jersey businesses and institutions resilient during this unprecedented crisis. We are so grateful for your efforts.

Governor Murphy has done an exceptional job in leading our state through the pandemic. The progress New Jersey has made toward “flattening the curve” has proved significant and, thus far, sustainable.

But until there’s a widely-available vaccine, the possibility of a resurgence remains—and that possibility has had a devastating impact on performing arts venues. Theaters around the country, even in states spared significant outbreaks, have been obliged to remain “dark” for months.

We implore you to support two pieces of legislation that could offer a lifeline to performing arts venues throughout the nation. **The Save Our Stages Act, S. 4258/H.R. 7806, introduced by Senators Cornyn and Klobuchar, and the RESTART Act, S. 3814/H.R. 7481, introduced by Senators Young and Bennet and Representatives Golden & Kelly in the House, are essential to the survival of this business.**

The Save Our Stages Act is specific to the performing arts industry, one that will be among the last to recover from the impact of the pandemic. This legislation provides the most support for the specific needs of an industry indispensable to the economic resilience of America’s cities. It is critical that theaters have the resources to not only survive this period of “intermission” but also to remain financially equipped to re-open.

The RESTART Act provides significant assistance to performing arts venues. The passage of this bill would allow theaters to retain the experienced professionals on their staffs—and prevent them from permanently losing their most knowledgeable team members, whose industry experience is critical to each venue’s reopening plans.

Performing arts venues need the protection offered by these two pieces of legislation to endure until reopening is possible. There are no viable adjustments we can make to pandemic-proof our work. Unlike restaurants, theaters can’t send their product home with their customers. Unlike retail stores, live performing arts venues cannot move their operations online. Many in the industry have spent countless hours attempting to design socially-distanced live performances—but given the drastic reduction in the number of seats any theater would be able to fill at such events, these are not economically viable. Nor is there any guarantee that they will be entirely safe for patrons.

Performing arts organizations are among the most significantly impacted by this crisis. Live performance venues in particular are struggling mightily. Unable to stage events, they have no income whatsoever. These venues are essential not just to the people they employ, but to the cities they enhance. **Performing arts centers are economic multipliers, community builders, educators, and beloved institutions. They drive significant spending at other businesses in their communities; for every dollar spent on a ticket, as much as \$12 more is spent by audiences at local restaurants, bars, hotels and shops.**

Your support of the Save Our Stages Act and the RESTART Act is indispensable, not just to keep the life-enhancing power of the performing arts a part of all communities, but to buoy a wide array of businesses and services in downtowns across the nation.

We urge you to support both these acts and encourage your colleagues to do the same. The arts have never been more important to a country in crisis—and they’ve never needed your support as urgently as they do today.

Best wishes,