

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader McConnell and Minority Leader Schumer,

As Congress continues to respond to the COVID-19 national emergency, we urge you to provide necessary relief to our nation's capital, the District of Columbia.

The CARES Act included important relief for state and local governments that are managing unanticipated costs as they prepare and respond to the threat of COVID-19 and manage the health and economic impacts. Every state will receive a minimum of \$1.25 billion. However, while the District of Columbia is consistently treated as a state in federal formulas for education, transportation, and other programs, the CARES Act grouped the District with the territories for the purpose of the Coronavirus Relief Program.

The District of Columbia is not simply the site of the federal government. It is home to 700,000 Americans, with a higher population than two states. Its residents pay federal income tax and follow federal laws. In fact, they contribute more tax revenue than 22 states. Currently, 495 residents of the District have been diagnosed with COVID-19, more than 19 states.

In an effort to flatten the curve and contain the spread of COVID-19, the District has closed all non-essential businesses through April 24, 2020. As in many of our states, small businesses are shuttered, local restaurants are struggling to convert to take-out operations or closing temporarily, and parents are at home caring for their children as schools are closed.

Because the CARES Act did not follow the precedent of treating the District as a state for the purposes of federal funding, the District will be shortchanged more than \$700 million.

Regardless of one's views on D.C. Statehood, it is shameful and unprecedented to change the District's treatment in a bill to provide support for emergency response. Controlling the spread of COVID-19 is a shared priority of all the states, and drastically underfunding an urban area that is closely connected to its surrounding states and the northeast corridor is shortsighted and inexcusable.

The District of Columbia does not have representation in the Senate, but it does have support. We urge you to work quickly to address this issue with new emergency appropriations to ensure that our nation's capital has the resources it needs to respond to this national emergency.

Sincerely,

/s/ Chris Van Hollen
CHRIS VAN HOLLEN

/s/ Tom Carper
TOM CARPER

/s/ Mark R. Warner
MARK R. WARNER

/s/ Benjamin L. Cardin
BENJAMIN L. CARDIN

/s/ Tim Kaine
TIM KAINE

/s/ Richard J. Durbin
RICHARD J. DURBIN

/s/ Bernard Sanders
BERNARD SANDERS

/s/ Christopher A. Coons
CHRISTOPHER A. COONS

/s/ Elizabeth Warren
ELIZABETH WARREN

/s/ Richard Blumenthal
RICHARD BLUMENTHAL

/s/ Jeffrey A. Merkley
JEFFREY A. MERKLEY

/Kirsten E. Gillibrand
KIRSTEN E. GILLIBRAND

/s/ Cory A. Booker
CORY A. BOOKER

/s/ Edward J. Markey
EDWARD J. MARKEY

/s/ Amy Klobuchar
AMY KLOBUCHAR

/s/ Mazie K. Hirono
MAZIE K. HIRONO

/s/ Tammy Baldwin
TAMMY BALDWIN

/s/ Jack Reed
JACK REED

/s/ Kamala D. Harris
KAMALA D. HARRIS

/s/ Robert P. Casey, Jr.
ROBERT P. CASEY, JR.

/s/ Michael F. Bennet
MICHAEL F. BENNET

/s/ Ron Wyden
RON WYDEN

/s/ Sherrod Brown
SHERROD BROWN

/s/ Tina Smith
TINA SMITH

/s/ Christopher S. Murphy
CHRISTOPER S. MURPHY