

Dear Senators Schumer and Gillibrand and Members of the New York State Congressional Delegation:

You are well aware of the desperate circumstances New York suffered at the outset of the COVID crisis and continues to endure today. We understand Congress is considering a short-term federal funding measure of approximately \$908 billion in COVID-19 relief. As an interim measure, this proposal should address states' immediate and pressing needs, and it is essential and fair that New York receive at least a minimum amount of funding necessary to stop further massive damage.

It is important to remind your federal colleagues that New York paid a unique price for COVID. New York's damages were a direct result of federal negligence. Unlike almost any other state, the COVID crisis in New York was caused by the COVID virus coming from Europe. Scientists have definitively traced our COVID strain to European countries. The Trump Administration was either unaware or did not inform New York that the virus had traveled from China to Europe and was traveling to New York State.

The Trump Administration banned travel from China on February 1 but did not ban European travel until March 16. By that time, over 3 million Europeans had traveled to New York and had been spreading the virus for months prior to our notification. That explains the explosion of cases in New York State. These facts have been confirmed by Dr. Redfield and Dr. Fauci in testimony before Congress.

Federal aid in the \$908 billion package must be proportionate to the damage incurred by states and consider the federal liability. New York has the highest number of deaths in the nation and has among the highest number of unemployed people in the nation because COVID came to New York before the Trump Administration even acknowledged COVID's presence on the eastern seaboard. Federal funds should not be distributed politically but rather distributed by need and damage. By any fair estimate, New York is the economic engine of the United States, a fact that should be recognized in any federal legislation intended to jumpstart the national economy, and no state was damaged to the extent that the federal government damaged New York.

New York's need is dire. If the MTA does not receive \$4.5 billion this year, 9,000 workers will be laid off, and subway and bus fares and tolls on crossings will be increased beyond the level of inflation. If New York State does not receive a minimum of \$15 billion in aid, or if New York City does not receive a minimum of \$9 billion in direct aid, then tax increases, layoffs of essential workers, and significant borrowing will all be necessary. This is no time to be imposing more burdens on hard-working New York families, nor is this the time to lay off essential workers, moments before we undertake a complicated and labor-intensive vaccination program.

We understand that you hope this initial package will fund states through next March at which time a more substantial package will be passed. However, we will not make it to March without the necessary funding outlined above.

Sincerely,

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo

Mayor Bill de Blasio

Andrea Stewart-Cousins
Temporary President and Majority Leader
New York State Senate

Carl Heastie
Speaker
New York State Assembly

Mario Cilento
President
New York State AFL-CIO

John Samuelson
International President
Transport Workers Union of America

Anthony Utano
President
Transportation Workers Union of Greater New York Local 100

Gary LaBarbera
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Building and Construction Trades Council of Greater New York

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Michael Mulgrew
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Wayne Spence
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NYS Public Employees Federation

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Richard Maroko
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