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THE COUNCIL OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK
MARK GJONAJ
COUNCIL MEMBER, 13TH DISTRICT, BRONX

CHAIR
SMALL BUSINESS

COMMITTEES
GENERAL WELFARE
HOUSING AND BUILDING
IMMIGRATION
JUVENILE JUSTICE
PARKS AND RECREATIONS
PUBLIC HOUSING

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
Monday, March 16, 2020
Contact: Reginald Johnson 1.914.560.6000

RELEASE

**“SUPERMAJORITY” OF NYC COUNCIL CALLS ON GOVERNOR CUOMO,
MAYOR DE BLASIO TO DELAY TAX PAYMENTS TO HELP BUSINESSES
COPE WITH THE CORONAVIRUS CRISIS, “SOCIAL DISTANCING”**

*Request comes as Mayor de Blasio is Expected to Sign an Executive Order Limiting
Restaurants, Bars, Cafés to Take-out and Delivery; Order will Completely Close Other
Venues such as Theaters, Nightclubs and Concert Halls*

New York, NY – Amid the coronavirus pandemic and its devastating impact on local businesses, 38 members of the New York City Council have called on Governor Andrew Cuomo and Mayor Bill de Blasio to delay payments of a specific set of taxes to help struggling small businesses.

The members call attention to the impact that the pandemic is having on locally owned businesses, “In addition to the potential loss of life, the coronavirus crisis has impacted our city in ways that we are just now starting to comprehend. As advised by health officials, New Yorkers are “social distancing” themselves and avoiding gatherings in an effort to remain healthy and help contain the virus. This is good. Unfortunately, this is also having a tremendously negative impact on retail businesses and restaurants that depend on customer traffic to stay open and pay their employees. In some cases, businesses are reporting a drop-in sales that is as high as 50%.”

Specifically, the supermajority of the Council called on the two leaders to “temporarily delay the payments of specific state and municipal business taxes without penalties until our retail sector has had a chance to weather this unpredictable crisis. Specifically, in the next few months a slate of taxes will be due: business taxes on March 16th, sales taxes on March 20th and June 20th, payrolls taxes on April 30th and real estate taxes (including commercial rent tax and BID assessments) on July 1st. ”

The request is being made as Mayor de Blasio is expected to sign an Executive Order which will further limit restaurants to take-out and delivery orders and completely close other venues such as theaters, nightclubs and concert halls.

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THE COUNCIL
OF
THE CITY OF NEW YORK

March 16, 2020

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Mayor Bill de Blasio
New York City Hall
New York, New York 10007

Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio:

Amid the ongoing crisis of the coronavirus pandemic, we the undersigned members of the New York City Council, call on you to delay the payment of a specific set of business taxes as locally owned businesses struggle to cope with an unprecedented loss in sales as customers avoid public venues.

New Yorkers are strong and resilient. Our city has been tested before and each time we have stood as an example of determination and tenacity. But today, like the rest of the world, we are being tested in a way like never before. In addition to the potential loss of life, the coronavirus crisis has impacted our city in ways that we are just now starting to comprehend. As advised by health officials, New Yorkers are “social distancing” themselves and avoiding gatherings in an effort to remain healthy and help contain the virus. This is good.

Unfortunately, this is also having a tremendously negative impact on retail businesses and restaurants that depend on customer traffic to stay open and pay their employees. In some cases, businesses are reporting a drop in sales that is as high as 50% - all while trying to meet payroll, pay government taxes and other expenses. This is an untenable situation.

Thus, we are calling on you to temporarily delay the payments of specific state and municipal business taxes without penalties until our retail sector has had a chance to weather this unpredictable crisis. Specifically, in the next few months a slate of taxes will be due: business taxes on March 16th, sales taxes on March 20th and June 20th, payrolls taxes on April 30th and real estate taxes (including commercial rent tax and BID assessments) on July 1st.

All levels of government must work together to provide struggling businesses with immediate relief so that they can keep cash on hand to meet their fixed costs and give them the ability to survive in this new reality. This crisis is happening in real time. Grants and loans that won't payout until the distant future may unfortunately be too late to save their business and the jobs that come with them.

In moments of crisis, leaders must be proactive and seek common sense solutions to seemingly immovable challenges. Paying taxes today and asking for loans and grants tomorrow defies logic.

Again, New Yorkers are strong and resilient. They only ask for fighting chance. Delaying the payment of key state and municipal business taxes will go a long way towards giving businesses, especially locally-owned mom-and-pop shops, the oxygen to weather this crisis.

Sincerely,

Mark Gjonaj
District 13 – Bronx

Margaret Chin
District 1 – Manhattan

Carlina Rivera
District 2 – Manhattan

Keith Powers
District 4 – Manhattan

Mark Levine
District 7 – Manhattan

Diana Ayala
District 8 – Manhattan

Ydanis Rodriguez
District 10 - Manhattan

Andrew Cohen
District 11 – Bronx

Fernando Cabrera
District 14 – Bronx

Ritchie Torres
District 15 – Bronx

Vanessa Gibson
District 16 – Bronx

Rafael Salamanca Jr.
District 17 – Bronx

Ruben Diaz Sr.
District 18 – Bronx

Paul Vallone
District 19 – Queens

Peter Koo
District 20 – Queens

Francisco Moya
District 21 – Queens

Costa Constantinides
District 22 – Queens

Barry Grodenchik
District 23 – Queens

Rory Lancman
District 24 – Queens

Adrienne E. Adams
District 28 – Queens

Karen Koslowitz
District 29 – Queens

Robert Holden
District 30 – Queens

Donovan Richards
District 31 – Queens

Eric A. Ulrich
District 32 – Queens

Stephen Levin
District 33 – Brooklyn

Antonio Reynoso
District 34 – Brooklyn

Laurie A. Cumbo
District 35 – Brooklyn

Robert E. Cornegy
District 36 – Brooklyn

Carlos Menchaca
District 38 – Brooklyn

Alicka Ampry-Samuel
District 41 – Brooklyn

Justin Brannan
District 43 – Brooklyn

Kalman Yeger
District 44 – Brooklyn

Farah N. Louis
District 45 – Brooklyn

Alan N. Maisel
District 46 – Brooklyn

Mark Treyger
District 47 – Brooklyn

Chaim M. Deutsch
District 48 – Brooklyn

Steven Matteo
District 50 – Staten Island

Joseph C. Borelli
District 51 – Staten Island