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AS NEW YORK'S LOCAL GOVERNMENTS FACE BILLIONS IN LOST REVENUE DUE TO COVID-19 CRISIS, GILLIBRAND CALLS FOR DIRECT FEDERAL RELIEF FUNDING FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENTS RESPONDING TO AND RECOVERING FROM CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IN PLATTSBURGH

Decreasing Revenues Due To The Coronavirus Pandemic Have Left Local Governments Strapped; Dedicated Federal Funding for Local Communities Would Provide Necessary Relief for Lost Revenues, Increased Costs And Will Help Avoid Local Tax & Fee Increases; The Direct Support for Communities Act Will Complement Direct Relief to States

PLATTSBURGH, NY – Today, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand called for legislation to provide local governments with direct federal relief that can be used to pay for essential services and offset lost revenues and increased costs stemming from the COVID-19 crisis. As local governments have faced slashed revenues due to the pandemic, direct assistance is needed to help state and local governments recover from this crisis.

Concerned about the layoffs of public health care workers, firefighters, police, sanitation workers, teachers, and other vital public servants across New York, Gillibrand is fighting to ensure that all counties, cities, towns, and villages — regardless of size — receive federal funding in order to continue providing these critical services. The direct relief would help local governments avoid local tax and fee increases that would place a heavier burden on already cash-strapped families and businesses in crisis.

“With more than 45 million people out of work and our economy in crisis, we cannot allow critical services provided by our first responders, health care workers, teachers, and public servants to go unfunded,” said Senator Gillibrand. “Now is not the time for more hardworking Americans to lose their jobs. This smart and necessary policy will get significant federal aid that our local governments need to recover and I will continue to fight for this essential funding in the next economic relief package.”

“Local governments are bearing the financial brunt of the COVID-19 outbreak and struggling to keep essential services and programs going to support New Yorkers during this difficult time,” Assemblyman Billy Jones said. “Without federal support, that financial burden will not only result in layoffs of public workers, but ultimately fall on local taxpayers – many of whom have seen their incomes slashed or lost their jobs due to the pandemic. Direct federal funding for our local governments is absolutely critical. I applaud Senator Gillibrand in calling for federal legislation that will provide this important relief to our communities.”

“Time is running out for counties across New York as increased costs from the pandemic and massive drops in revenue force deep cuts to services and layoffs. We’re grateful to have an ally like Senator Gillibrand who understands that any stimulus legislation must include federal aid to state and local governments and her bipartisan Direct Support for Communities Act is exactly what counties need to protect local services. Some reports coming out of Washington, D.C. indicate that Congress is contemplating a stripped down bill without aid to state and local governments. That is unacceptable and we applaud Senator Gillibrand, as well as Senator Schumer and the entire NY Delegation for their efforts to provide local governments with the resources they need to deliver the essential services that New Yorkers need now more than ever,” said Stephen Acquario, Executive Director of the New York State Association of Counties.

“We are at a critical juncture in this debate and I want to thank Senator Gillibrand and the New York delegation for the continued fight to provide direct aid to state and local governments in the next federal relief package,” said

Mark R. Henry, Chairperson of the Clinton County Legislators. *“Solely due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Clinton County is facing a budget shortfall of nearly \$20 million, and absent additional federal assistance, will have no choice to reduce or eliminate critical services on which citizens rely. Counties stand ready to lead our communities through the rest of this crisis, but we need resources from the federal government to do it. It’s time to act and send direct, flexible aid to counties!”*

“Counties and municipalities have been the frontline of combatting and controlling this pandemic in America. In our county's case it was all hands on deck and all resources required to keep our people safe. Resources were appropriated and redirected quickly and efficiently without question as it was and continues to be the top tier responsibility of local government,” said **Shaun Gilliland, Chair of the Essex County Board of Supervisor.** *“It is unfathomable that the federal government would turn their back on state and local governments, as well as local taxpayers, to deal with the crisis alone.*

“Facing unprecedented revenue shortfalls and surging expenses, Franklin County has been forced to make difficult financial decisions. In reaction to the anticipated reduction in local aid from New York State and likely sales tax shortages, we have had to reduce costs, institute a purchasing/travel freeze and temporarily lay-off nearly 20% of our workforce while attempting to maintain vital services for our community. This has taken its toll on the finances of our county,” said **Frances Perry, Franklin County Treasurer.** *“Without direct federal aid, Franklin County will be forced to look at even more drastic cost reductions and increasing county property taxes, either of which could be disastrous for our taxpayers and community. The Direct Support for Communities Act could be a lifeline for Franklin County in a time when our taxpayers are facing serious economic challenges.”*

“Right here in Clinton County among our 14 towns, 3 villages, and the City we are experiencing decreased sales taxes, court fees and further cuts in state aid on the horizon coupled with the compounding impacts of the US/Canadian border closure. Local government provides critical services to our communities encompassing health and safety as well as quality of life services including but not limited to water and sewer, road maintenance, and parks and recreation,” said **Michael S. Cashman, Supervisor, Town of Plattsburgh.** *“It is crucial that the federal government provide funding directly to local governments to ensure that these critical services are not get impacted.”*

“We have been working actively with Senator Gillibrand these past months on the content of the next COVID relief act, and the need for major aid for counties and local governments has been a high priority,” states **Garry Douglas, President of the North Country Chamber of Commerce.** *“Counties are central to so many services that in turn are keys to the regional economy, especially in New York. From our community college and workforce development to health services and so much more, stabilizing our counties is at the core of recovery. Just as important is substantial additional aid under the PPP program for businesses still struggling or not yet able to even open, allowing a second round for these small businesses. Senator Gillibrand has been listening and actively seeking input and we thank her for working with us.”*

The nation’s economic recovery depends on the survival of state and local governments, however, New York alone is projected to lose more than \$240 billion in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Because of these deficits, thousands of New Yorkers working in state and local government have already lost their jobs at a time when many families are struggling to make ends meet. In Plattsburgh the local government has already had to make staff reductions and cut expenses

Senator Gillibrand previously introduced the [Direct Support for Communities Act](#) and is calling for its inclusion in the next coronavirus relief package. The legislation would create a local relief fund to help cities, towns, villages, and counties address costs associated with lost revenues, and would help avoid cuts to essential services or local tax and fee increases. Part of the funding would be administered to localities through the Community Development Block Grant program while additional funding would be sent directly to states to allocate to communities based on population. Senator Gillibrand has repeatedly urged the Senate to include desperately needed state and local funding in the next relief package.

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