|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | |
|  |  | |
| **July 10, 2020**  **The Honorable U.S. Senator Rob Portman**  448 Russell Senate Office Building  Washington, DC 20510 | | | **The Honorable U.S. Senator Sherrod Brown**  713 Hart Senate Office Building  Washington, DC 20510 | |

Dear Senators Portman and Brown:

Thank you for your leadership in addressing many of the challenges that our country is facing from the continuous spread of the novel coronavirus. We recognize the work that Congress has done to provide critical supports for businesses and the initial efforts to help state and local governments with COVID-related expenses through the CARES Act.

However, more must be done to mitigate the fallout from this pandemic. Two critical steps that Congress can take right now are to ease the current restriction on federal aid allocated in the CARES Act and to provide additional financial assistance to state and local governments. Doing so will provide budget stability for state and local governments and allow our communities to better support the private sector as we work to re-open our economy safely and effectively.

As you know, Ohio has received $4.5 billion in CARES Act Funds. $1.2 billion was intended for Ohio local governments with populations under 500,000. To date, the state has allocated $350 million to Ohio’s counties, cities, villages and townships that fall under the population cap noted above.

The U.S. Treasury Guidance expressly prohibits the one use that is most critical for communities in every corner of the state – revenue replacement to help stabilize local budgets. Furthermore, these funds are required to be utilized before the end of the calendar year while the impacts of the virus are likely to extend well beyond that timeframe.

If these restrictions remain and Congress does not allocate additional emergency fiscal assistance to state and local governments, our community will be forced to deal with very serious budgetary consequences. To be clear, even if Congress gives state and local governments the flexibility to use the money that’s already been allocated, that will not be enough to address our challenges.

Now more than ever a robust, flexible emergency federal assistance package for state and local governments is critical to a safe, strong, and swift recovery. We hope we can count on your support and your determined advocacy with the leadership teams to help make this essential aid package and increased flexibility a reality for Ohio’s local governments.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Respectfully, |  |
|  |  |