May X, 2020

Senator Rob Portman

448 Russell Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Senator Sherrod Brown

503 Hart Senate Office Building

Washington, DC 20510

Senators,

We represent Ohio university and college towns, large and small, which are experiencing some of the harshest economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. On behalf of our residents and businesses, we urge you to support an economic lifeline of direct aid to local governments in the next Senate response to the COVID-19 pandemic to help us stabilize and reopen our communities.

Local governments are taking extraordinary measures to ensure residents’ health and safety as well as maintain essential services during the quarantine. Unfortunately, the fiscal consequences of COVID-19 are unprecedented and have hit college towns’ economies hard. When colleges and universities closed their campuses, hundreds and thousands of students left our communities; graduations, sporting events, and other meetings that brought visitors to town were cancelled; and local businesses dependent on these visitors and students suffered significant revenue losses, many being forced to close their doors permanently. Without students in residence, city utility revenue, local sales and guest tax revenue, road and gas tax revenue, and other sources of public funding have steeply declined. We are using our carefully saved reserves and trimming all areas of our budgets, but alone this will not be enough to make up for the millions of dollars in revenue lost to the cascade of impacts of COVID-19.

Without a relief lifeline to restore our local economic activity, recovery for many college towns will mean cuts to essential services and local layoffs of front-line workers, including emergency first responders, sanitation employees, and health service providers, who keep our communities safe and moving forward during this difficult time.

**We urgently request your support for all local governments. Recent National League of Cities economic analysis finds that municipalities across the country are facing over $360 billion in lost revenues over the next three years due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on local economies. NLC has recommended the Senate move forward with at least $125 billion in 2020 and $125 billion in 2021 for municipalities governing cities, towns, and villages of all sizes to reopen our communities and maintain core responsibilities, including keeping emergency responders on the job and intervening in localized outbreaks of COVID-19 and restoring the economic activity of our communities in lasting ways.**

We ask you to include a lifeline of direct support to local government to ensure that we can maintain our essential services, rebound from this challenge, and revitalize our economies in the months ahead. Our communities and our economic recovery depend on your support.

Sincerely,

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