



Representative Ben Ray Luján  
2323 Rayburn House Office Building

September 29, 2020

Dear Representative Luján,

The residents, nonprofits, businesses, and governments in New Mexico need meaningful COVID relief now. Votes without enactment of COVID legislation is not relief. Action after the election will be too late for too many of your constituents.

Time truly is of the essence, and we believe the newly introduced [Heroes 2 bill](#) represents progress in congressional efforts to identify and address the issues of critical importance to our shared constituents, the people of New Mexico. I am writing on behalf of the members of the New Mexico Thrives, and the New Mexicans they serve, to ask you to use this last best chance to negotiate and enact meaningful COVID relief before leaving town for the election.

The 2,152-page Heroes 2 bill includes many provisions on which reasonable people can have differing view. Yet the health and economic crises demand that we overcome our differences and reach agreement where we can. I'd like to highlight a narrow set of issues related to that bill and ask that you speak up for the work of charitable organizations and champion their inclusion in a final bill that we hope will be negotiated in the coming days. The following views are in keeping with the bipartisan priorities expressed in the [new Nonprofit Community Letter](#) and endorsed by more than 4,000 nonprofits in all 50 states:

- **Paycheck Protection Program Improvements:** Charitable organizations welcome the renewal of and improvements to the PPP incorporated in Division E of the Heroes 2 bill. We believe this version improves on the text found in several Senate bills and would, if enacted, help sustain nonprofit organizations as they struggle to serve the increasing demands in our state.
- **Relief for Mid-Size Nonprofits:** It is with gratitude and appreciation that we endorse the extension of the PPP to larger charitable organizations left out of prior COVID relief law. We also acknowledge that proposed reforms to the Main Street Lending Program and a low-cost loan option tailored to the unique needs of nonprofits could provide additional help in some situations.
- **Employee Retention Tax Credit:** Between the CARES Act, the Senate HEALS Act, and the revised Heroes Act, we urge adoption of this new latest iteration of the ERTC. As drafted, the Heroes 2 bill in Division F would enable nonprofits to retain and restore employees who are vital to providing services in communities throughout the state.

- **Unemployment Cost Relief:** The Heroes 2 bill provides partial relief to employers for the exorbitant and immediate costs of unemployment benefits, but it does not go far enough. The bill, in Division I, extends for six months temporary relief for nonprofits and governments set to expire at the end of the year. However, it fails to increase coverage of 100% of the costs of self-insured nonprofits and other employers. We renew our request that Congress increase the federal unemployment insurance reimbursement for self-insured nonprofits to 100% of costs.
- **Above-the-Line Deduction Expansion:** To the great disappointment of charitable nonprofits in New Mexico and throughout the country, the Heroes 2 bill does not include any of the improvements to the above-the-line deduction incorporated in the CARES Act that have been proposed in bipartisan legislation in the House and Senate. We believe the charitable giving provision included earlier this month in the Senate Delivering Immediate Relief to America's Families, Schools and Small Businesses Act is a reasonable compromise that should be a part of the final COVID relief legislation. Charitable nonprofits need greater resources to maintain the support they are providing; an improved above-the-line deduction is critically needed as soon as possible.

I conclude with the words of numerous [nonprofit CEOs delivered to congressional leaders](#) last week: "The CARES Act was tremendously helpful, but it wasn't designed to last this long, and it did not provide relief for all nonprofits. Further relief is needed now. Come back to the negotiating table now and do not leave until a deal is reached. Our organizations can't wait. Our communities can't wait. The American people can't wait."

Sincerely,



Tsiporah Nephesh  
New Mexico Thrives