



House of Representatives
COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

July 15, 2020

The Honorable Robert P. Casey, Jr.
United States Senate
393 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick J. Toomey
United States Senate
248 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Casey and Senator Toomey:

It has been nearly two months since the U.S. House of Representatives passed the HEROES Act to support Americans as they weather the unprecedented health and economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, yet the Senate has failed to take action on this important legislation. With cases rising across the country and again in Pennsylvania -- creating an even more serious strain on our health care systems and testing capacity as we move toward fall -- federal leadership is desperately needed to help Pennsylvanians get the care they need and the protections they deserve. In May, the Pennsylvania General Assembly worked with Governor Tom Wolf to pass an interim, partial budget, but the fate of many essential services depends on your actions to provide additional support to states.

The budgetary challenge caused by the coronavirus pandemic is at least as large as what the commonwealth faced from 2007 to 2009, when Federal aid helped buoy our economy in the teeth of the Great Recession. Additional fiscal relief for the commonwealth is critical to maintain essential public services that Pennsylvanians depend on, and will promote economic recovery. The same is true for local governments.

As children and teachers prepare to return to the classroom in just a few weeks, school districts face rising costs to ensure safe learning environments – including health and safety, technology, and transportation. While the CARES Act provided federal relief to help address some of these costs, local revenues are expected to fall by an estimated 6.4% for the median district in Pennsylvania. If the state is forced to resolve its budgetary challenges alone through cuts, all programs will be at risk. Education is the second largest portion of Pennsylvania’s budget. Further, funding cuts will have a greater impact on school districts more reliant on state support, meaning our poorer districts that are struggling the most will face even more uncertainty in their ability to provide high quality education.

Without additional fiscal relief, racial, socioeconomic, and geographic inequities already present in our commonwealth will continue to grow, at odds with the voice of the nation united to demand change. On behalf of the Pennsylvania House Democratic Caucus, we ask you to support the HEROES Act and urge your Senate leadership to do the same.

Thank you for your immediate attention to, and consideration of, this urgent and vital legislation.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Frank Dermody". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the beginning and a long tail extending to the right.

Frank Dermody, Democratic Leader
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jordan A. Harris". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large loop and a long tail.

Jordan A. Harris, Democratic Whip
Pennsylvania House of Representatives

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Matt Bradford". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized, with a large loop and a long tail.

Matt Bradford, Democratic Chair
Pennsylvania House Appropriations Committee