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Bill McBride
Executive Director
National Governor's Association
444 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 267
Washington, D.C. 20001
rsolt@nga.org

Tim Storey
Executive Director
National Conference of State Legislatures
444 North Capitol Street, N.W., Suite 515
Washington, D.C. 20001
tim.storey@ncsl.org

Matthew Chase
Executive Director
National Association of Counties
660 North Capitol Street, NW
Suite 400
Washington, DC 20001
mchase@naco.org

David Adkins
Executive Director
Council of State Governments
CSG National Headquarters
1776 Avenue of the States
Lexington, KY 40511
dadkins@csg.org

Tom Cochran
CEO and Executive Director
U.S. Conference of Mayors
1620 I Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006
tcochran@usmayors.org

Elizabeth A. Loudy
Executive Director
State Government Affairs Council
108 North Columbus Street, 2nd Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314
eloudy@sgac.org

The undersigned organizations are writing to urge your organization's state, county and municipal policymaker members to quickly and fully allocate available American Rescue Plan federal funds to provide assistance to renters, consumer-facing small businesses, and impacted industries such as retail, tourism, travel, and hospitality that are having trouble paying rents, mortgages or remaining viable enterprises due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The need for assistance to renters is urgent. On September 4, 2020, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) published an Agency Order that halts evictions nationwide, which was recently extended again until June 30, 2021.¹ Many states have implemented similar measures. While these moratoriums temporarily delay evictions for Americans who are unable to pay their rent during the pandemic, they do not prevent those tenants from ultimately being evicted. Without rental assistance, tenants may find themselves with unmanageable backlogs of unpaid rent at the end of the moratorium period.

The CDC Agency Order and other eviction moratoriums also put tremendous financial pressure on the owners of rental housing, many of whom are small business owners, who must meet their obligations to pay taxes, insurance, mortgage payments, and most importantly maintain a safe and habitable housing that tenants deserve.

The need for assistance to small businesses, travel, tourism, and the entire hospitality industry is also urgent.

¹ Available at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/09/04/2020-19654/temporary-halt-in-residential-evictions-to-prevent-the-further-spread-of-covid-19>

These businesses have suffered due to government-imposed restrictions intended to slow the spread of COVID-19. According to Alignable², a small business network, 49% of small businesses could not make rent payments in March 2021, up 11% from February and 16% from January. This includes 67% of minority-owned businesses, 53% of women-owned businesses were unable to make rent, and 48% of nonminority-owned businesses. Furthermore, the American Hotel & Lodging Association³, half of hotel rooms are projected to remain empty throughout 2021, and business travel, which drives more than half of the industry's revenues, is forecasted to remain anemic as the nation recovers. More than 500,000 hotel employees are projected to remain out of work this year and it will be 2024 before the hotel industry returns to its pre-pandemic performance levels. Furthermore, many businesses remain closed, or are open at unsustainable – and unprofitable – levels of capacity.

For many small businesses, the Paycheck Protection Program has been extremely helpful. Unfortunately, many apartment, retail, hospitality and consumer-facing business owners were unable to access such loans due to programmatic restrictions.

Fortunately, the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (Act) provides funds that states may use to supply assistance to COVID-19 affected renters as well as to small businesses and the hospitality industry.

For example, the Act provides \$25 billion in emergency rental assistance to help those who have fallen behind on their rent. Our members are concerned about the need for this assistance to be distributed quickly and without unnecessary programmatic restrictions.

In addition, the Act provides \$350 billion in additional state and local aid that states are permitted to use to assist households, small businesses, and nonprofits, or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality.

We strongly urge elected municipal, county, and state leaders and other policy makers to target any remaining portions of their allocations, and any other available funding, to rental assistance, small business assistance and to aid the travel, tourism, and hospitality industry. Such assistance would make a big difference in the lives of thousands upon thousands of COVID-19 affected renters and businesses in their cities, counties, and states and would also provide stability to the buildings and communities in which they live.

We recognize that cities, counties, and states are already working to address a wide variety of issues arising directly and indirectly from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that policy makers in communities across the country have to make many hard choices as to how to use all available funds. Our organizations urge all of them to prioritize households, small businesses, and the hospitality industry.

If you have questions, or would like more information, please contact Mike Flood (mflood@mba.org), Senior Vice President, Commercial/Multifamily Policy and Member Engagement at the Mortgage Bankers Association.

² Available at: <https://www.alignable.com/forum/alignable-nearly-half-of-all-small-businesses-couldnt-pay-their-rent-in-march-2021>

³ Available at: [2021 state of the industry 0.pdf \(ahla.com\)](#)

Respectfully,

American Hotel & Lodging Association
American Resort Development Association
Appraisal Institute
CCIM Institute
Commercial Real Estate Finance Council
Council for Affordable and Rural Housing
International Council of Shopping Centers
Institute of Real Estate Management
Manufactured Housing Institute
Mortgage Bankers Association
Nareit
National Affordable Housing Management Association
National Alliance to End Homelessness
National Apartment Association
National Association of Affordable Housing Lenders
National Association of Home Builders
National Association of Housing Cooperatives
National Association of Local Housing Finance Agencies
National Association of REALTORS®
National Housing Conference
National NeighborWorks Association
National Leased Housing Association
National Multifamily Housing Council
Stewards of Affordable Housing for the Future
The Real Estate Roundtable