



DELAWARE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF DELAWARE
LEGISLATIVE HALL
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

April 17, 2020

RE: Provide Flexible Assistance for Coronavirus Relief Funds

Dear Senator Carper, Senator Coons and Representative Blunt Rochester:

Congress has taken some bold, decisive actions to blunt the harsh effects that the COVID-19 pandemic has wrought on nearly every facet of our lives. We know you have been a staunch advocate for ensuring that these efforts provide relief to average Americans and Delawareans, and we thank you for that.

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act provides \$150 billion directly to states, territories, tribes and localities to combat the public health and economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Those funds will be transferred to states during the next two weeks.

Delaware is fortunate to have fierce advocates in Congress who fought to ensure that small states like ours were not overlooked in comparison to their larger neighbors and were awarded significant funding. However, like many states, Delaware is facing a looming budget shortfall that already is unprecedented in our state's history. The full economic impact of this crisis might not be realized for several months.

Our challenge as the authors of Delaware's operating budget is to craft a balanced budget that maintains critical services to residents at a time when many need them most. Meeting this increased demand for government services when our funds are dwindling is daunting, to say the least.

The CARES Act provides vital funding, but it restricts the money to unbudgeted expenses related to COVID-19. It cannot be used to address states' revenue losses. This is far too restrictive for states like Delaware to effectively apply the federal funds. Being able to use these dollars to shore up Delaware's operating budget is critical to maintaining services and recovering from this unprecedented crisis.

On behalf of our members, we are asking you to support Congressional efforts to amend the CARES Act to provide states flexibility to use the funds to compensate for unprecedented revenue losses. Flexible federal funds for state revenue shortfalls will help states continue to provide vital citizen services, prevent further shutdown of vital sectors of the state economy, and hasten the recovery once social distancing measures are relaxed.

We hope you will join your colleagues in Congress to amend the CARES Act and help states more effectively fight the looming budget crisis that many of us will be facing.

If you have any questions, we are always available to speak with you further.

Sincerely,



Pete Schwartzkopf
Speaker of the House
14th District



David B. McBride
Senate President Pro Tempore
13th District



Valerie Longhurst
House Majority Leader
15th District



Nicole Poore
Senate Majority Leader
12th District



J. Larry Mitchell Jr.
House Majority Whip
13th District



Bryan Townsend
Senate Majority Whip
11th District



Daniel B. Short
House Minority Leader
39th District



Gerald W. Hocker
Senate Minority Leader
20th District



Timothy D. Dukes
House Minority Whip
40th District



Catherine Cloutier
Senate Minority Whip
5th District