

July 27, 2020

The Honorable Ted Cruz  
United States Senate  
127A Russell Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cruz,

On behalf of the Greater Houston Partnership, representing the business community of the 11-county greater Houston region, we hope you will support a new COVID-19 stimulus package that includes the following four priorities:

1. Business Liability Protections

We urge you to support a relief package containing liability protections for all employers, businesses, schools, colleges, and non-profits that follow public health guidelines. Employers and businesses who make reasonable efforts to follow public health guidelines should not be held liable for personal injuries or medical liability associated with COVID-19 infections. Additionally, front-line health workers and hospitals need appropriate liability protections while working under pandemic conditions. Similar to Good Samaritan laws, hospitals, front-line health workers, and other health care entities should be protected from liability except in cases of gross negligence or intentional misconduct.

2. Funding for Community Health Clinics

To ensure our community health clinics can continue to perform their role, we urge you to support the inclusion of \$10 billion in emergency funding for community health clinics. Our community health clinics have been filling an important role in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. These clinics are on the front lines of testing and triaging patients, acting as the safety net primary care providers, and helping to reduce the burden on hospitals. However, many are facing severe funding gaps due to COVID-19 disruptions and a decrease in other patient visits, and without additional funding, community health clinics will struggle to continue to provide these vital services.

3. Continued Funding for State and Local Governments for Pandemic Response

The next stimulus package should include additional aid to states and cities for their continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic. State and local governments need flexibility to use the aid to address unforeseen revenue shortfalls resulting from COVID-19 disruptions. Many of our cities and state agencies are facing budget shortfalls and are reducing services or laying off employees. We request your support in including additional federal aid for state, local, and tribal governments to respond to the pandemic effectively.

#### 4. Funding to Address the Connectivity Gap

The lack of reliable internet has become an education crisis for many families during these unprecedented times. School closures have forced online education to become the norm for many of our children, thus exacerbating the existing inequities caused by the connectivity gap. In order to ensure every child has the opportunity to learn and to continue their education while at home, we urge you to support the inclusion of funding to explicitly address the connectivity gap. Access to internet is a basic need for students and their families and we hope you act swiftly and sufficiently to address this gap and ensure all children can continue their education whether in the classroom or at home.

Thank you for your work on addressing these important issues during this difficult time. We would be happy to work with you and your staff on these priorities or answer any questions you may have.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bob Harvey". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Bob Harvey  
President & CEO