



May 9, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Leader McCarthy:

We write on behalf of the nation's mayors and the major city police chiefs to thank you for all you have done to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic and fiscal crisis. Congress has been swift in passing three COVID-19 relief bills and we hope that you will soon pass a fourth measure that includes direct and flexible fiscal assistance for all cities across the nation. COVID-19 is taking a heavy financial toll on city budgets in general and with local law enforcement on the front lines of our response, police department budgets in particular have been strained.

A recent survey of over 2,400 cities and towns by the U.S. Conference of Mayors and the National League of Cities showed that, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, 88% of the responding cities anticipate they will experience a revenue shortfall this year. Without additional assistance to help address the shortfall, the impacts of COVID-19 will extend well beyond the end of the pandemic. Furthermore, since public safety accounts for such a large portion of local budgets, it's inevitable that local law enforcement budgets will be negatively impacted. In fact, more than half of all of the cities that responded to the USCM and NLC survey indicated that police activities will be affected by a revenue shortfall.

Anecdotally, Madison, WI may have to eliminate 30 police department positions next year; Oklahoma City is looking at a 3.3 percent cut in its police department; Dayton's Mayor has said that without federal help, her city will have less police officers; and Albany's Mayor has commented that in the absence of federal help, she may have to lay off hundreds of police officers and other workers who have been on the front lines, responding to the pandemic.

Members of the Major Cities Chiefs Association have also reported COVID-19 related impacts that extend beyond salary cuts and layoffs. The Houston Police Department expects to cancel five cadet classes. Between these cancellations and retirements, Houston stands to lose approximately 700 officers. Some members have expressed concern that COVID-19 will affect future recruitment and retention efforts. Other members have postponed or cancelled investments in important technology programs, including body worn cameras. Many cities will also be forced to cancel summer youth programs. These programs are an important aspect of community policing efforts and there is concern that without them, youth crime rates may rise.

As a result of COVID-19 we have a public health crisis, a public safety crisis, and a fiscal crisis in our cities. As you consider a fourth bill to address the ravages of the pandemic, we urge you to include direct, flexible fiscal assistance to our cities so that we can continue to do everything possible to protect and serve our residents. The nation's mayors and police chiefs stand ready to work with you to make this happen.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'B. Barnett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Bryan K. Barnett
Mayor of Rochester Hills, MI
President, The U.S. Conference of Mayors

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Art Acevedo', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Art Acevedo
Chief, Houston Police Department
President, Major Cities Chiefs Association

cc. Members of the U.S. House of Representatives



May 9, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

We write on behalf of the nation's mayors and the major city police chiefs to thank you for all you have done to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the related economic and fiscal crisis. Congress has been swift in passing three COVID-19 relief bills and we hope that you will soon pass a fourth measure that includes direct and flexible fiscal assistance for all cities across the nation. COVID-19 is taking a heavy financial toll on city budgets in general and with local law enforcement on the front lines of our response, police department budgets in particular have been strained.

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