

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20510

May 15, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Republican Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Democratic Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader McConnell, Leader McCarthy, and Leader Schumer:

We write to you with deep concern over the recent threats issued by Governor J.B. Pritzker to possibly withhold federal aid provided through the State of Illinois from any local government that reopens its economy in accordance with federal health guidelines but ahead of Governor Pritzker's own arbitrary timetable.

Both Congress and President Trump's Administration have taken extraordinary measures to address the COVID-19 pandemic through four pieces of legislation. The *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* provided nearly \$4.9 billion in funding for the State of Illinois—providing support to our frontline health care workers and direct relief to workers and families, expanding unemployment benefits, and bolstering small business with financial assistance.

The U.S. Treasury and the Small Business Administration approved over 160,000 Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loans to date, totaling over \$23 billion for Illinois small businesses and placing Illinois in the top five states for loan approval. On top of that, the Trump Administration and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) have delivered over 6.3 million pairs of surgical gloves, over 1.5 million surgical masks, over 3.4 million N95 respirators, and over 500,000 face shields for health care workers.

As we work to get our country back on track, we must take the appropriate measures to balance the health and economic needs of individual communities that make up our regionally diverse state. Small businesses across Illinois are struggling to survive and are prepared to take unprecedented public health precautions to reopen in a safe manner for their communities. If these businesses are prohibited from reopening, many will close their doors permanently leaving families without income, workers without jobs, and communities with no tax base.

On top of Governor Pritzker's ongoing campaign to persuade Illinois voters to raise the state income tax on small businesses in November, the Governor's latest threat to withhold federal assistance from communities in need is unconscionable.

Illinois' fiscal challenges have long been documented. Decades of poor budget and tax policy, financial mismanagement, and unattainable promises have worsened budget shortfalls and bloated long-term liabilities. Illinois' financial issues will only make our recovery from this virus more difficult.

Now more than ever, it's critical that resources allocated by Congress and the White House be delivered to everyday Illinoisans, small businesses, and healthcare workers. Democrats in the Illinois General Assembly, however, recently requested that the federal government provide billions of dollars in federal funding to bailout our state's pre-COVID-19 financial struggles. Illinois' financial issues weren't caused by COVID-19, and federal taxpayers shouldn't be on the hook for Illinois' fiscal mismanagement.

We appreciate your work to help the American people, and we believe additional relief efforts should be focus solely on providing COVID-19 assistance so that we may effectively protect our most vulnerable citizens like seniors and those with preexisting health conditions. The idea that Illinois Democrats may seek a federal bailout for decades of fiscal mismanagement, unrelated to COVID-19, while Governor Pritzker prohibits communities impacted by COVID-19 from receiving federal assistance appropriated by Congress is simply reprehensible.

While Congress should consider prohibiting Illinois from raising income taxes on small businesses as a condition of state aid, we urge you to act immediately to ensure no governor can withhold federal funds appropriated by Congress for local municipalities that allow their small businesses to reopen in accordance with federal health guidelines.

Sincerely,



DARIN LAHOOD
Member of Congress



JOHN SHIMKUS
Member of Congress



ADAM KINZINGER
Member of Congress



RODNEY DAVIS
Member of Congress



MIKE BOST
Member of Congress

cc: Secretary Steven Mnuchin