

NABOB

National Association of
Black Owned Broadcasters

April 14, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House of Representatives
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

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

The local radio and television stations of the National Association of Black Owned Broadcasters (“NABOB”) are providing important news and information about the COVID-19 pandemic to their communities every day. In recent days, it has been widely reported that the pandemic is hitting the African American community particularly hard. In some urban areas, the African American death rate is twice that of other racial groups. Therefore, it is critical that, in the next round of pandemic response legislation, Congress provide financial assistance to our member stations so that we can continue to provide much-needed news and information to help our most vulnerable citizens survive the pandemic. Without it, many of our stations will be forced to layoff staff, reduce news and information broadcasting, and possibly cease operating all together. This would be a devastating loss for the communities that rely upon our stations as their most trusted sources of news and information about the pandemic.

Local broadcast stations rely primarily on purchases of advertising by local businesses to operate. With the shutdown of economic activity caused by the pandemic, the local restaurants, car dealers and retail stores, who are the primary advertisers on local radio, have stopped much of their advertising. As a result, many NABOB local broadcast stations have seen revenue declines of 40% to 50% in March and April. No one knows how long the effects of the pandemic will last, and very few local broadcasters can continue to operate with these types of revenue losses.

You were recently contacted by a coalition of media organizations, consisting of the National Association of Broadcasters, the News Media Alliance, the National Newspaper Association and America’s Newspapers, asking that specific provisions be added to the next round of pandemic response legislation. NABOB has joined with these groups to add its support to their requests. NABOB requests that Congress act now to:

- **Fund Federal Advertising Spending on Local Media:** Local broadcasters and newspapers can provide the federal government with unparalleled reach to provide critical information to communities across the country. Whether it is a singular unified national message or a locally-focused call to action, Congress


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can ensure that the people have the information they need most by directing current U.S. government advertising campaigns (such as those promoting the Census) to local news and media outlets, and providing the Department of Health and Human Services, the Small Business Administration and other relevant agencies with an additional \$5 to \$10 billion for direct funding for local media advertising. These ads could carry information on medical resources, status of testing sites, data from the Center for Disease Control, mental health awareness, access to small business loans and other critical governmental information. Advertising spends should be distributed across local media sectors and equitably allocated across large, medium and small communities.

- **Ensure the Ability of Local Media to Seek Relief Under the Paycheck Protection Program:** Many local media and news organizations (those with a majority of their audience within a single community or metropolitan area) exist within larger business groups. Regardless of their ownership, they all provide critical information to local communities and have been similarly harmed by the COVID-19 crisis. Local news publisher and broadcaster eligibility for the newly-established Paycheck Protection Program relief must be determined at a local level (based on the local newspaper publisher or station) using a similar framework applied to restaurants and hotels.

Thank you for your consideration of our request. Please contact me if there is additional information you require or any additional assistance NABOB can provide.

Sincerely,



James L. Winston
President