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May 14, 2020

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi:

On behalf of the more than 55 organizations that make-up the Building the California Dream Alliance, we want to begin by thanking you for your leadership in addressing the COVID-19 Public Health Emergency and preparing for an inclusive and just recovery. More importantly, we are writing to thank you for introducing the HEROES Act which will provide \$3 trillion of federal support for direct and flexible relief for state and local governments, increasing FMAP funding, increasing SNAP benefits by 15% and ensuring that immigrant communities are included in direct cash payments, among other things. We are committed to working with your team and the entire California Congressional Delegation to secure the passage of this bill.

In 2011 our state faced a budget deficit in excess of \$20 billion. State and local workers had been furloughed, our safety net was in tatters and the state's credit rating had reached junk bond levels. Under the leadership of the Legislature and Governor Jerry Brown, California righted the ship. In a few short years we restored portions of our safety net, expanded health care for millions through the Affordable Care Act, passed the first statewide \$15 an hour minimum wage and paid sick time, repealed the use of money bail for persons accused of a crime, ended juvenile justice fees, created a robust state earned income tax credit and funded a Budget Stabilization Account which was set to have more than \$20 billion in the 2020-21 state budget. California still has more to do, but we have been making real progress towards a more equitable and just society.

Now we're in the COVID-19 crisis. Governor Gavin Newsom acted swiftly and effectively by ordering all Californians but essential workers to shelter at home. To date, we have limited damage compared to other states, but in protecting lives we have lost millions of jobs from the 5th largest economy in the world. By choosing to protect public health, the state has suffered a tremendous economic blow. Latinos and Black Americans suffer most -- both from contraction of and death caused by

COVID-19, and from job loss. The cost of fighting the virus in our hospitals, nursing homes, public health systems, businesses and residences is still mounting.

State and local tax revenues have dropped precipitously, and even the significant reserves we have in place cannot cover the anticipated lost revenue. We face massive cuts to state and local governments that will far exceed those in the Great Recession. Even worse is that with the loss of revenue. We will see less spending in our economy, which will create more job loss, making the recovery harder and longer for immigrant families, the elderly, children, and those living with disabilities -- all through no fault of their own.

We need to make massive investments to avoid another wave of human calamity - hunger, poverty, and homelessness. We need to create clean and well-paying jobs, save small businesses, and invest in infrastructure to help us recover. For this reason, we are grateful for your leadership in the introduction of the HEROES Act and know that you will pursue its passage with great diligence.

We must not repeat the mistakes of the Great Recession, where a pullback in public investment at the state and local levels accelerated the economy's downward spiral, resulting in greater job loss, a longer and slower recovery, and long-term damage to those who had the least to begin with. Now is a time to redouble our commitment to a just and inclusive recovery. We must choose the proven path of stimulus instead of the destructive dead-end and failed policy of austerity.

Again, thank you for your vision and leadership at this pivotal moment in our nation's history.

Sincerely,



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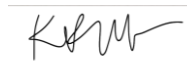
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