



July 24, 2020

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President & CEO
Vanita Gupta

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

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

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

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

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

On behalf of The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, a coalition of more than 220 national organizations, I write today to stress the critical importance of state stabilization funding for the District of Columbia in the COVID-19 relief package that the Senate is working to develop.

As you know, the District received significantly less funding from the CARES Act than did the states, despite the fact that its residents, including many residents of color, have been significantly and disproportionately affected by the coronavirus crisis. This is also despite the fact that there is strong precedent for DC receiving funding that is on par with that of the states in federal funding formulas including those for housing and education. This is a civil rights issue and a racial justice issue. I urge you to ensure that this funding shortfall is corrected in the forthcoming legislation and to ensure equal treatment for the residents of the District for the purposes of relief going forward.

The disparity in funding under the CARES Act is the latest example in a 200-year history of unequal and unjust treatment for residents of the District of Columbia. This is despite the fact that the District's contributions to the federal government are both unique and substantial. Last week, thousands of DC residents paid taxes (on a higher per capita basis than any other state) to a government that does not provide them with full representation, and that has withheld critically needed COVID-19 relief funding from them. This funding is needed to pay for testing, medical equipment, and for the continuation of critical services like food distribution for children, seniors, and vulnerable adults, among other things.

Since the passing of the CARES Act and the shortfall of funding to DC, DC has experienced the largest gap in death rates from COVID-19 between Black and white residents. Black residents, who account for 46% percent of the District's population, account for nearly three-quarters (74%) of the city's coronavirus deaths. By that measure, DC's gap is the worst in the nation. Denying the District the funding that it needs to respond to this pandemic would perpetuate this gap and further put the lives of District residents at stake.

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I urge you to not to be swayed by the arguments that opponents of this funding will present as negotiations unfold. This is an issue that is of critical importance to District residents who are currently being unfairly left behind. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vanita Gupta". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Vanita Gupta
President and CEO