



Troy D. Jackson
President of the Senate

129th Maine Legislature

Sara Gideon
Speaker of the House

March 25, 2020

Senator Susan Collins
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Angus King
133 Hart Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Chellie Pingree
2162 Rayburn HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Representative Jared Golden
1223 Longworth HOB
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Collins, Senator King, Representative Pingree, and Representative Golden:

We come to you as a delegation during this time of pandemic crisis to ask you to do everything within your power to help vital Maine small businesses remain viable. COVID-19 is not only rampaging through our healthcare system, it is ravaging our economic security as well. It is true that Maine is well known for its sense of independence and entrepreneurial spirit, yet during these uncertain times our sole proprietors, which represent a large percentage of Maine's workforce, need more assistance than short-term loans if they are to survive and continue to be a driver of the state's economy.

It is with this in mind, that we ask you to propose a federal waiver within the Unemployment Insurance Benefits program to allow sole proprietors to collect benefits while the state and the nation are reeling from the insecurity accompanying the Coronavirus pandemic.

Small businesses in Maine pay into state unemployment insurance and federal unemployment insurance pools for their employees. These same small business owners do not always count themselves as employees, rather they earn their salaries through the company's profit. This means at times, they do not take home any salary at all. This is the unfortunate position that many Maine entrepreneurs find themselves in today as only essential businesses remain open. This emergency is creating a reality where employees of these small businesses can access the unemployment insurance safety net, while their employers, who contribute funds, are left falling through holes in the system.

Additionally, we ask you to urge President Trump to issue a Major Disaster Declaration for the COVID-19 outbreak in Maine, as he has for Washington, California, and New York. A Major Disaster Declaration will allow the implementation of the Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) program which provides financial stability to individuals, including self-employed people and sole proprietors, who have become unemployed as a direct result of a Major Disaster. With thousands of Mainers losing their jobs due to COVID-19 in Maine, many of them ineligible for regular Unemployment Insurance, DUA will be a lifeline to keep Maine's economy afloat while protecting public health.

We know you are working diligently to keep your constituents safe and secure. We, for our part, are doing so as well. We hope that we can work together on this issue to ensure the hub of Maine's working people is protected during this time of deep concern.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,

Sen. Troy Jackson
Senate President

Rep. Sara Gideon
Speaker of the House

Sen. Nate Libby
Senate Majority Leader

Rep. Matt Moonen
House Majority Leader

Sen. Eloise Vitelli
Senate Asst. Majority Leader

Rep. Ryan Fecteau
House Asst. Majority Leader

Sen. Shenna Bellows
Sen. Cathy Breen
Sen. Michael Carpenter
Sen. Brownie Carson
Sen. Justin Chenette
Sen. Ben Chipman
Sen. Ned Claxton
Sen. Susan Deschambault
Sen. Bill Diamond
Sen. Jim Dill
Sen. Geoff Gratwick
Sen. Erin Herbig
Sen. Mark Lawrence
Sen. Louis Luchini
Sen. Rebecca Millett
Sen. David Miramant
Sen. Heather Sanborn
Sen. Linda Sanborn
Rep. Robert Alley
Rep. Chris Babbidge
Rep. Shawn Babine
Rep. Donna Bailey
Rep. Pinny Beebe-Center
Rep. Seth Berry
Rep. Lydia Blume
Rep. Michael Brennan
Rep. Heidi Brooks
Rep. Mark Bryant
Rep. Chris Caiazzo
Rep. Kristen Cloutier
Rep. Ben Collings

Rep. Janice Cooper
Rep. Margaret Craven
Rep. Ed Crockett
Rep. Mattie Daughtry
Rep. Diane Denk
Rep. Mick Devin
Rep. Jan Dodge
Rep. Vicki Doudera
Rep. Richard Farnsworth
Rep. Jess Fay
Rep. Victoria Foley
Rep. Lori Gramlich
Rep. Nicole Grohoski
Rep. Jim Handy
Rep. Thom Harnett
Rep. Allison Hepler
Rep. Craig Hickman
Rep. Dan Hobbs
Rep. Brian Hubbell
Rep. Patty Hymanson
Rep. Henry Ingwersen
Rep. Chris Kessler
Rep. Tori Kornfield
Rep. Scott Landry
Rep. Colleen Madigan
Rep. John Martin
Rep. Danny Martin
Rep. Anne-Marie
Mastraccio
Rep. Ann Matlack
Rep. Chloe Maxmin

Rep. Dave McCrea
Rep. Jay McCreight
Rep. Genevieve
McDonald
Rep. Andrew McLean
Rep. Gina Melaragno
Rep. Michele Meyer
Rep. Victoria Morales
Rep. Steve Moriarty
Rep. Kevin O'Connell
Rep. Maggie O'Neil
Rep. Sean Paulhus
Rep. Sarah Pebworth
Rep. Joe Perry
Rep. Anne Perry
Rep. Lois Reckitt
Rep. Tina Riley
Rep. Tiffany Roberts
Rep. Deane Rykerson
Rep. John Schneck
Rep. Braden Sharpe
Rep. Steve Stanley
Rep. Holly Stover
Rep. Mike Sylvester
Rep. Rachel Talbot Ross
Rep. Denise Tepler
Rep. Mo Terry
Rep. Ralph Tucker
Rep. Charlotte Warren
Rep. Bruce White
Rep. Paige Zeigler