



April 29, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building

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

During this crisis, UNITE-LA, a nonprofit organization working with the business community to ensure the youth of Los Angeles have the knowledge, skills, and values they need to succeed in school, career, and civic life, is striving to meet both the immediate needs as well as address, and ultimately solve for the structural inequities and disparities facing our children, students, and adult workers. UNITE-LA works closely with chambers of commerce across the country to promote equity and access to quality education and workforce development so our young people are prepared for high-skilled, high-wage careers.

We strongly support the efforts of our colleagues in education and workforce development urging Congress to provide a significant infusion of resources in the next stimulus package. A cradle to career approach is needed to fully address the impacts associated with the COVID-19 health crisis. The nation's child care system is facing an unprecedented and existential crisis. School districts across the country must spend resources they do not have to ensure a continuity of learning and student well-being, and, are simultaneously facing historic state and local budget cuts which are expected to last for years to come. College students are experiencing sudden financial insecurity, loss of educational opportunities, and loss of food and housing security. And, especially in light of the staggering unemployment rate, we need a comprehensive national workforce development strategy that supports both unemployed workers to reenter the workforce and businesses to minimize further job loss, creates new jobs, and prepares workers and students for both today's in-demand jobs and those leading to economic growth after the pandemic.



Congress must provide states with the resources necessary to mitigate both the educational and economic disruptions facing our communities.

We entered this time of quarantine, however, with tremendous inequities embedded in our institutions and the most vulnerable individuals already dealing with the challenges of income and opportunity gaps. The effects of COVID-19 are and will more adversely impact these communities, which include low-income families, communities of color, immigrant families, and people with disabilities. We are concerned that even the solutions to the current crisis, particularly federal efforts, are being implemented through a system with deep structural inequities, despite the fact that many members of these communities are performing the essential work we all depend on to get through this crisis. Accordingly, we respectfully urge Congress to strongly consider the disproportionate impact that COVID-19 is having on vulnerable communities when crafting relief.

In addition, we cannot exclude millions of members of our communities from the relief so desperately needed, particularly when it comes to access to health care, nutrition, and income supports. First and foremost, the next COVID-19 relief package must ensure that access to health care, both testing and treatment, is available regardless of a person's immigration status, income or categorical eligibility. We must ensure access to nutrition assistance through programs like the Disaster Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and to the stimulus rebates for everyone who files tax returns, whether they use a Social Security Number or an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number. Importantly, we must ensure DACA students are entitled to relief provided by the U.S. Department of Education.

Finally, we are deeply concerned about the impact COVID-19 is having on our criminal justice system. We respectfully urge you to consider supporting state and local efforts to mitigate COVID-19 transmission risk in jails and prisons by reducing incarcerated populations while ensuring critical assistance services for communities through trauma recovery, violence prevention and reentry services.

Absent a bold, courageous approach to challenge the negative effects of COVID-19, the underlying structural, systemic inequities will increase exponentially; however, we believe that we can utilize the uniqueness of this time to create new innovative solutions that will



allow us to surpass what would have been possible prior to COVID-19 and ensure a bright future where children, students and adult workers of all races, genders, and backgrounds will be able to thrive in life and in this new 21st century economy.

Please consider your chamber of commerce to be a resource and a partner as communities across the country plan to reopen. We are civic organizations who share your commitment to ensuring America's workers have access to high-quality child care and their children have a safe place to learn. We are grateful for your leadership. Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Rattray", is positioned above the printed name.

David Rattray
President & CEO
UNITE-LA