

SENATORS NATIONWIDE HOST NATIONAL INDEPENDENT VENUE ASSOCIATION MEMBERS AS THEIR STATE OF THE UNION GUESTS

Mar. 2, 2022 – Nearly two years after the COVID-19 pandemic shuttered venues across the country and 14 months after the passage of the bipartisan Save Our Stages Act, Congressional leaders invited members of the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) to attend President Biden’s first State of the Union Address as their guests. Among those attending were Dayna Frank, NIVA board president and owner and CEO of First Avenue in Minneapolis, courtesy of Senator Amy Klobuchar, and Scott Hammontree, co-owner of The Intersection Grand Rapids, Mich., courtesy of Senator Debbie Stabenow. Delaware Senator Tom Carper showed his support en masse, inviting three NIVA members: Ron Ozer, president of Arden Concert Guild in Arden, Del., Mark Fields, executive director of the Grand Opera House in Wilmington, Del., and Darren Silvis, development director at the Freeman Arts Pavilion in Selbyville, Del.

“Live venues were among the first businesses to close down from the pandemic and the last to reopen. As I worked to pass the Save Our Stages Act, Dayna Frank was a crucial partner in fighting to ensure independent venues could stay afloat, including our beloved First Avenue,” said Klobuchar in her own release yesterday. “Dayna helped keep businesses open, workers employed, and music alive for communities in our state and across the country. I’m excited to have her as my virtual guest to President Biden’s State of the Union to highlight the work we’ve done to help small businesses get back on their feet.”

The passage of the Save Our Stages Act and implementation of the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program has seen \$13.7 billion awarded to nearly 13,000 recipients nationwide, saving thousands of small businesses and small business owners in the arts and entertainment sectors from the brink of collapse while preserving and expanding job opportunities across the country.

“I’m honored to join Senator Klobuchar as her virtual guest for the State of the Union. When the pandemic hit, small independent music venues throughout the country were in real danger of closing permanently, harming local economies from small towns in rural America to the largest cities,” said Dayna Frank. “Senator Klobuchar heard our call and worked tirelessly across the aisle to pass the Save Our Stages Act. This crucial emergency funding helped us persevere through an incredibly trying time, and now I am proud to say First Avenue is open for business and serving the community we love, bringing back jobs, and welcoming fans by the tens of thousands.”

ABOUT NIVA

Formed April 2020 at the onset of the COVID-19 shutdown, National Independent Venue Association (NIVA) represents independent music and comedy venues, promoters, and festivals throughout the U.S. NIVA created and led the #SaveOurStages campaign, resulting in landmark legislation establishing the \$16 billion Shuttered Venue Operators Grant program administered by the Small Business Administration. NIVA’s mission is to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live venues, promoters, and festivals throughout the United States. The [National Independent Venue Foundation](#) (NIVF) was founded to further this mission by also seeking to support a transparent, competitive marketplace serving a diverse and inclusive community of artists, fans, and industry workers. NIVA is committed to equity in its support and advocacy for independent venues and seeks to create and encourage opportunities for venues, promoters, and festivals owned, operated, and staffed by people of color, women, non-binary, LGBTQ+, veterans, and people with disabilities.

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