

STATEMENT FROM THE NATIONAL INDEPENDENT VENUE ASSOCIATION REGARDING PASSAGE OF THE SAVE OUR STAGES ACT

The Save Our Stages Act, sponsored by Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) and Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) in the [Senate](#), Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT) and Rep. Roger Williams (R-TX) in the [House](#) and championed by Leader Chuck Schumer (D-NY) with 230 bipartisan cosponsors in Congress, just passed as part of the COVID-19 Relief Bill. The Save Our Stages Act will provide financial assistance to independent venues and promoters that have been devastated by the pandemic's shutdown. The Save Our Stages Act will enable these locally owned businesses to hold on until it is safe to gather, reopen fully, and once again return to serve as economic engines for their communities. We look forward to this being signed into law.

The [National Independent Venue Association](#) (NIVA), formed in the early days of the pandemic, now with 3,000 members representing every state and Washington, D.C., is grateful not only for this crucial support for an industry that has been on the verge of mass collapse, but also for the accompanying COVID-19 relief to millions of unemployed workers across the country who have been sidelined through no fault of their own by the economic fallout of the shutdowns.

The legislation provides critical help to shuttered businesses by providing a grant equal to 45% of gross revenue from 2019, with a cap of \$10 million per entity. This grant funding will ensure recipients can stay afloat until reopening by helping with expenses like payroll and benefits, rent and mortgage, utilities, insurance, PPE, and other ordinary and necessary business expenses.

"This is the lifeline our industry so desperately needs to emerge from a devastating year," said Dayna Frank, Owner & CEO, First Avenue Productions and Board President of NIVA. "Without independent venues and promoters across the country working to engage their communities, staff, and artists, our voices would not have been heard – we are thankful for those tireless efforts. Careers came to a standstill overnight, and people continue to face personal hardships, which is why legislation like this and extending Pandemic Unemployment Assistance is essential. Our immense gratitude goes, in particular, to Senator Klobuchar, Senator Cornyn, and Senator Schumer, for securing the future of independent venues and promoters for generations to come."

Few gave this brand new organization with no staff and no lobbying experience any hope for securing emergency aid. Undeterred in its fight for the industry's survival, NIVA worked with [Akin Gump](#), led by Casey Higgins with collaboration from Ed Pagano, to bring the fight to Congress. "Without Akin Gump's belief in our cause and advice on how to get this done, we could never have gotten the Save Our Stages Act passed," said Adam Hartke, owner of The Cotillion and WAVE in Wichita and co-chair of [NIVA's Advocacy Committee](#). "They fought for us like they *were* us. The entire industry will forever owe them a debt of gratitude."

This was a true grassroots effort. NIVA members reached out to their fans letting them know of the dire situation: venues having no revenue and enormous overhead potentially leading to their shutting forever. People responded – in an overwhelming fashion. NIVA thanks those across the country who sent 2.1 million emails to their elected officials expressing their support for the Save Our Stages Act. All 535 Congresspeople heard from their constituents through [SaveOurStages.com](#).

The outpouring of support from the music community was also loud and clear, thanks to more than 1,200 artists who signed [letters to Congress](#), amplified the message on their [social media accounts](#), donated proceeds from livestreams and merchandise sales, and played [#SOSFEST](#), including Foo Fighters, Miley Cyrus, The Roots, The Lumineers, Brittany Howard, Dave Matthews, Reba McEntire, Leon Bridges and Nathaniel Rateliff.

While the amount of people and organizations that lent support are numerous, NIVA specifically recognizes and thanks the Academy of Country Music, Akin Gump, American Association of Independent Music, Americans for the Arts, Anheuser-Busch InBev, Indie on the Move, Association of Performing Arts Professionals, Ballard Spahr LLP, BandsInTown, Bill Young Productions, Broadway Across America, The Broadway League, CAA, Carnegie Hall, Country Music Association, DiMA, Etix, Eventbrite, Future of Music, HelloMerch, Holland Law, Jägermeister, League of American Orchestras, Lyte, MAC, Music Biz, National Association of Theatre Owners, National Independent Talent Organization, National Music Publishers Association, OPERA America, PACC, Paradigm, Prism, Recording Academy (Grammy Awards), Recording Industry Association of America, Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, See Tickets, SESAC, Shukat Arrow Hafer Weber & Herbsman, L.L.P., Songwriters of North America, Sony, SoundExchange, Spotify, Universal, WME, WMG, YouTube, and every fan and NIVA member that carried our message.

“We’re forever thankful to Senators Cornyn and Klobuchar for crafting the legislation, Representatives Welch and Williams for sponsoring the companion bill in the House, Senators Rubio and Cardin for spearheading support in the Senate Small Business Committee, Representatives Valázquez and Chabot for shepherding the bill through the House Small Business Committee and Leader Schumer for his unending support,” said Hartke.

WHAT’S NEXT

Independent venues and promoters were the first to close in March, and they are still shuttered with no income and massive overhead. Ninety percent of NIVA members reported they could be forced to close forever without meaningful federal relief; hundreds have already permanently shuttered, never to return again. This relief comes none too soon.

NIVA hopes to work with the Small Business Administration to ensure the emergency relief is dispersed as Congress intended, that the instructions and process to apply for grants ensures that only those organizations that fit the description in the law are funded, that there is a keen eye to protect against fraud, and that the process is implemented accurately and as expeditiously as possible.

Since it could take many weeks, even months for the funding to flow, the [NIVA Emergency Relief Fund](#), with The Giving Back Fund as its 501(c)3 fiscal sponsor, continues to raise money to assist the venues at greatest risk of permanently going under as we wait for Save Our Stages Act to be implemented. Special thanks go to YouTube Music and Anheuser-Busch InBev which collaborated with NIVA for #SOSFEST, raising much needed bridge money, and [Jägermeister](#) for its recent donation of \$1 million. Even still, the NIVA Emergency Relief Fund requires \$2 million more in donations to fulfill the immediate and urgent requests for help. Anyone wishing to donate can do so [here](#).

About NIVA

Formed at the onset of the COVID-19 shutdown, National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), now represents more than 3,000 independent venues and promoters in all 50 states and Washington, D.C. These independent venues and promoters were the first to close and will be the last to fully reopen. NIVA's mission is to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent live venues, promoters and festivals throughout the United States. To learn more about NIVA's quest to gain federal funding for independent venues, visit <https://www.nivassoc.org/take-action>. The [National Independent Venue Foundation](#) has been created to focus on separate, supplemental initiatives, such as the NIVA Emergency Relief Fund. The NIVA Emergency Relief Fund is a tax-deductible way for individuals, companies, and foundations to contribute. The NIVA Emergency Relief Fund directly supports the preservation of the independent live entertainment ecosystem that presents music, comedy, and the performing arts, helping these critical spaces survive through the Coronavirus pandemic.

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