



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 1422

Resolution calling upon Congress to pass, and the President to sign, the Save Our Stages (SOS) Bill (S.4258/H.R.7806) to establish a grant program for small live venue operators and talent representatives to address the economics effects of COVID-19.

Council Members Van Bramer, Kallos, Vallone and Powers

Whereas, According to the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), every year thousands of independent venues host millions of concert events that are attended by hundreds of millions of concertgoers; and

Whereas, These independent entertainment venues provide jobs in local communities for hundreds of thousands of artists, musicians, comedians, actors, venue operations and production staff, organizers, promoters, producers, managers, sound engineers, lighting professionals, stage personnel, box office personnel, talent agents and managers; and

Whereas, These independent entertainment venues generate millions in tax revenue while serving as economic multipliers for local economies in providing support to neighborhood businesses such as restaurants, hotels and retail establishments; and

Whereas, Live concert event venues were among the first to close in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will likely be among the last to reopen, and these still shuttered venues have left employees without jobs having to rely on unemployment benefits that will eventually cease to exist and neighboring businesses without the benefit of revenues and economic support previously generated by the entertainment venue patrons; and

Whereas, Since March 16, 2020 all restaurants, bars and nightlife venues in New York City have been

temporarily closed due to COVID-19, prompting layoffs to some 67,600 arts and entertainment sector employees; and

Whereas, The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) originally stipulated 75 percent of the funds be spent on payroll and only 25 percent be spent on expenses such as rent and utilities; and

Whereas, Because PPP was not designed to cover the steep, ongoing costs venues incur even in the absence of paying customers, the majority of venues have been unable to afford to resume business as usual; and

Whereas, Despite the PPP guidelines having been amended in the June 2020 PPE Flexibility Act, which now stipulates 60 percent of the loan be spent on payroll with 40 percent to be spent on rent and utilities, the exorbitant rent costs in New York city would quickly drain the percentage allowed by a PPP loan therefore providing little if any help to the small independent venues; and

Whereas, Evictions in New York City are still suspended, yet local venues are left to wonder how long they can depend upon the moratorium to prevent permanent closure of their independent performance spaces within the city; and

Whereas, According to a poll conducted by NIVA in June 2020, absent federal aid, 90 percent of America's independent music venues expect to permanently shut their doors by the end of 2020; and

Whereas, The Save Our Stages (SOS) Bill (S.4258/H.R.7806) is a bi-partisan bill introduced by Sen. John Cornyn (R-TX) on July 22, 2020 and Rep. Peter Welch (D-VT-At Large) on July 27, 2020 authorizing the United States Small Business Association to make initial grants up to \$12 million dollars to eligible operators, promoters, producers or representatives with additional supplemental grants equal to 50 percent of the initial grant to be used for costs and expenses including payroll, rent, utilities and personal protective equipment (PPE) incurred between March 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021;

Whereas, The possibility of permanent closure of these independent venues threatens the ability of the artistic community to hone their craft and catch the attention of industry professionals seeking to develop new

talent, while also depriving local neighborhoods the opportunity to support and cultivate local artists and patrons who constitute the epicenter of the cultural and economic community in each neighborhood; now, therefore, be it,

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York call on Congress to pass, and the President to sign, the Save Our Stages (SOS) Bill (S.4258/H.R.7806) to establish a grant program for small live venue operators and talent representatives to address the economics effects of COVID-19.

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