July 28, 2020

I.   Coronavirus Relief Bond (CRB) Legislation Advances, Before Senate on Thursday
II. New Federal COVID Relief Bill Offers No Relief for New Jersey Municipalities
III. Urge Your Citizens to Respond to the Census

Municipal Clerks: Please forward to your Mayor, Governing Body and Department Heads.

To assist in providing guidance and information we have created a [COVID-19 resource page](#). We will continue to update the page as we get pertinent information and include announcements in our Daily Updates.

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I. Coronavirus Relief Bond (CRB) Legislation Advances, Before Senate on Thursday

Today the Senate Budget and Appropriations Committee released [S-2475/A-3971](#), which authorizes the issuance of "coronavirus relief bonds" (CRB) by municipalities and counties. The legislation permits municipalities to issue bonds for the loss of revenue and/or unanticipated expenses directly attributable to the COVID-19 pandemic with appropriate safeguards and Local Finance Board oversight.

League Executive Director Mike Cerra was joined by Little Falls Administrator Charles Cuccia and Wharton Administrator/Chief Financial Officer Jon Rheinhardt in testifying in support of the legislation noting that a one size fits all solution is not the best approach toward addressing revenue shortfalls and increased expenses municipalities are facing as result of COVID-19. Current options available to municipalities may work for some municipalities but for most they will create long term financial problems. Local governments need the flexibility that S-2475/A-3971 provides to limit the impact on property taxpayers.

The full Senate is scheduled to consider the legislation on Thursday. Please contact your

Senator urging them to support S-2475/A-3971.

II. New Federal COVID Relief Bill Offers No Relief for New Jersey Municipalities

Yesterday in Washington, U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell unveiled a new COVID Relief bill. The product of negotiations within the Senate Republican caucus, and between it and the White House, the Health, Economic Assistance, Liability Protection and Schools (HEALS) Act largely looks to leave our Nation's state and local governments to fend for themselves, despite mounting revenue losses and increased expenses caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The bill would make changes to the $150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF), which was established in the March CARES Act, allowing local recipients of CRF resources to use their allocations to cover revenue losses. States would be able to use CRF funds to close revenue gaps only if, and after, they reallocate at least 25 percent of their total awards to counties and municipalities.

The HEALS bill would provide businesses, hospitals, schools, and universities with strong protections against liability lawsuits for damages related to the virus. Injured employees, customers, patients, and students would need to assert both gross negligence and violation of state and local public health guidelines to proceed in court; and Federal Courts would have exclusive jurisdiction on COVID-19 cases.

The bill also includes $105 billion in education aid, $70 billion of which would be dedicated to K-12 schools. Two-thirds of that $70 billion would be directed to schools meeting the 'minimum opening requirements' for in-person instruction.

The bill looks to address public health needs by spending $16 billion on testing, sending another $16 billion to the National Institutes of Health, and extending an additional $3 billion to the Centers for Disease Control. It also includes funding for another round of direct stimulus checks, increased funding for small business support, and a complicated plan of reduced Federal support for the unemployed.

Negotiations with Senate Democrats and with U.S. House Leadership are now possible.

As a reminder, back in May, the House passed the HEROES Act, which includes close to $1 trillion in support for State and local governments. Every New Jersey municipality would qualify for HEROES Act help.

We will keep you posted, as negotiations develop. In the meantime, please contact Senators Menendez and Booker and your Representative in the House. Thank them for their past support, and impress upon them the absolute need for direct local aid in, what will likely be, Congress' last COVID relief bill, before the November elections.

III. Urge Your Citizens to Respond to the Census

To be blunt about it, the U.S. Census is all about two things: Funding and Representation. Every one of your citizens who remains uncounted is a missed opportunity. And every

missed opportunity is a bonus for those living elsewhere. What your citizens do, or fail to do, now will impact your community and our state for the next ten years.

Please use all your communications platforms to engage all in your municipality to respond. Please direct anyone who has not yet responded to United States 2020 Census.

Last week, the U.S. Census Bureau began to send out reminder postcards to non-responding households. This week, the Bureau will be sending e-mails to households in low-responding areas. And next week, census takers will begin door-to-door contacts.

New Jersey's response rate stands at 64.5 percent. Congratulations to our Top Ten responders: Glen Rock (88%); Berkeley Heights (84.7%); Oradell (84.3%); Washington Township – Bergen (83.9%); Mountain Lakes (83.8%); Glen Ridge (83.6%); Cranbury (82.6%); River Edge (82.5%); Mansfield Township – Burlington (82.1%); and Waldwick (81.9%). Your municipality's rate is available at the U.S. Census Bureau Rankings Dashboard.

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