



Informs ■ Educates ■ Advocates

March 23, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
H-232 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
House Minority Leader
H-204 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221 The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Re: Time-sensitive request for emergency stimulus funding for grieving families and small businesses

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

The National Funeral Directors Association is the world's leading and largest funeral service association representing 20,000 funeral directors and 11,000 funeral homes. Funeral homes are playing a vital, if often overlooked, part of the public health of our nation. During a time of crisis like the COVID-19 pandemic, when the nation comes together to try to save lives, it can be hard to contemplate the sad inevitability that, as we have seen in other countries, there *will be* mass-fatalities.

Members of our organization are on the front lines dealing with the usual daily death rate; illness within their own families and staff; and additional COVID-19 deaths that may overload their capabilities. Guidance issued by the Department of Homeland Security on critical infrastructure workers placed mortuary workers in the same category as healthcare workers, like doctors and nurses. Rest assured, deathcare professionals stand ready to provide meaningful assistance to our nation, as they always do during times of crisis, by caring for the dead and their grieving families.

As you know, the majority of funeral homes in this country are small, multi-generational family-owned businesses and are pillars of the communities they serve. More than 141,000 licensed and nonlicensed professionals work in our nation's funeral homes, cemeteries and crematories caring for the 2.839 million people who die each year. These businesses generate \$16.323 billion in revenue, contributing to the economic health of communities throughout the country.

We respectfully ask that you include the deathcare profession in any emergency economic stimulus packages you enact. Like many other small businesses throughout the nation, we fear the financial impact of COVID-19 will result in funeral homes being forced to downsize their workforce or even shut their doors, hindering their abilities to handle the increased death rate and impacting the economic health of the communities they serve. These much-needed funds will enable funeral businesses to continue serving families and communities long after this crisis has passed.

Second, as businesses throughout the country, such as retail stores and restaurants, shut down and lay off workers during this pandemic, many families will struggle to afford a dignified funeral and final disposition for their loved ones. This crisis also impacts the poor, underserved and indigent who cannot afford a funeral. **We ask, on behalf of those families who will experience the death of a loved one, that you consider providing emergency relief in this time of grief and crisis.**

On behalf of the more than **19,100 funeral homes and 141,000 funeral professionals** in the United States, we are grateful for your leadership and stand ready, as always, to care for the dead and the families left behind.

Sincerely,



Christine Pepper, MBA, CAE
Chief Executive Officer
National Funeral Directors Association

