

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 22, 2020

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

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

Dear Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leader McCarthy:

As you consider further legislative packages to assist our communities that have been impacted by the novel Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, we request that cost of living adjustments for localities are made when considering economic stimulus payments to residents and businesses. Doing so would help ensure that New Jersey residents are not erroneously excluded from needed assistance.

A study recently published by the St. Louis Federal Reserve, based on data provided by the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, showed that New Jersey has one of the highest costs of living in the nation. In New Jersey, a household yearly income of \$66,876 provides the same standard of living as a salary of \$47,884 in Mississippi or \$49,992 in Arkansas. Although this high cost of living means that average yearly salaries are higher for residents, it does nothing to mitigate the devastation the COVID-19 pandemic is having on the 8.9 million Americans and 861,373 small businesses that call New Jersey home.

On Saturday, March 21, 2020, New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy issued an executive order mandating that all non-essential retail businesses close and that state residents only leave their homes if necessary. Health experts agree that this is what is necessary to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus and the strain the pandemic is having on our healthcare system. However, without the ability for people to work and spend money within the local economy, employees of small and medium-sized businesses will be particularly impacted. This health-related economic slowdown threatens the ability of New Jersey residents to pay for their housing, afford food, or purchase necessary products to protect their health during the pandemic.

We look forward to working with you further on this important matter and urge you to utilize all tools available to assist our local communities.

Sincerely,

**Josh Gottheimer**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

**Mikie Sherrill**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

**Jefferson Van Drew**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

**Donald M. Payne, Jr.**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

**Bonnie Watson Coleman**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

**Andy Kim**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS

**Tom Malinowski**  
MEMBER OF CONGRESS