



Hon. Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor, State of New York
Executive Chamber, Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Hon. Bill de Blasio
Mayor, City of New York
New York City Hall
New York, New York 10007

April 30, 2020

Dear Governor Cuomo and Mayor de Blasio,

An unprecedented challenge calls for unprecedented action, and in March, the United States Congress passed a bipartisan emergency economic relief package to assist American workers, small businesses, as well as state and local governments, all of whom have been affected by the COVID-19 Pandemic. When President Donald J. Trump signed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act into law, it officially became the largest economic relief package in our nation's history – a sign of the enormous challenge we face. Despite this, millions of New Yorkers are still struggling. Many are out of work, and those still working continue to do so despite knowing the risks because they simply have no other choice and must put food on the table. As a matter of fact, many of our front-line workers are proud union members.

We are writing to both of you because it recently came to our attention that the City of New York is considering terminating a contract between the New York City Department of Education and yellow school bus companies as a cost-cutting measure. We cannot stress enough that we believe this action would be irresponsible. It would have a devastating impact on approximately 16,000 yellow school bus drivers, escorts, and mechanics, 90 percent of whom are of a racial minority, meaning this could have a profound impact on some of New York City's most vulnerable communities. Putting these workers out of jobs would take away their healthcare and leave them reliant on unemployment insurance, two systems that have already been sorely stretched by the public health emergency.

We do understand that the State of New York and the City of New York are in a dire financial situation, which is why we propose that, in an effort to save these 16,000 jobs, both your offices coordinate to request emergency funding through the CARES Act to repurpose the yellow school bus system towards supporting the New York City Transit system as it adjusts to the pandemic. According to the U.S. Department of the Treasury, the CARES Act requires that payments made from this fund only be used to cover "necessary expenditures incurred due to the public health

emergency; were not accounted for in the budget most recently approved as of March 27, 2020 for the state or local government; and were incurred during the period that began on March 1, 2020 and ends on December 30, 2020.” We believe that these terms can now be met as a result of the recent announcement to close the New York City Transit subway system for several hours, from 1AM to 5AM, by using yellow school buses to move these now displaced passengers around. The yellow school bus fleet would it would reduce the load on the New York City Transit bus system to allow local and express buses to be taken offline for disinfection as well. Social distancing can be easily enforced because of the low ridership, and as an added precaution, a plexiglass window could be installed to protect the driver, and PPE could be provided as well. By assigning yellow school bus drivers this duty, their contract would not need to be terminated, and the City of New York would be recompensated for those costs through the CARES Act. We can also prevent the yellow school bus system from collapsing due to massive layoffs, thus reducing its readiness for when school inevitably resumes.

Again, so many of the New Yorkers on the front-line of this war are union men and women. We should stand by them the same way they stand by during these times of crisis. We hope you will take our proposal under consideration, and we look forward to hearing from your respective offices. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us directly.

Sincerely,



Michael Reilly
Member of Assembly
62nd District



Max Rose
Member of Congress
NY-11