

March 24, 2020

New Jersey Congressional Delegation  
U.S. Senate and House of Representatives  
Washington D.C.

Re: Support and Relief for Self-Employed Independent Contractors

Dear New Jersey Congressional Delegation,

On behalf of New Jersey Realtors® I am asking Congress to provide support and relief to the nearly 55,000 Realtors® in New Jersey. The vast majority of our members, who are agents for the majority of residential real estate sales in New Jersey and property managers for many small real estate investors, are independent contractors. The industry is not simply limited to agents, but also includes mortgage lenders, appraisers, landlords, accountants, real estate investors, title companies, and other businesses related to the buying and selling of homes. Due to the recent outbreak of COVID-19, the measures that seek to “flatten the curve,” including social distancing, the closure and limited scope of municipal, county and state government, and the closure of “non-essential” businesses, our members have found great difficulty in conducting their business and earning a living. We are also beginning to see trouble in relation to seasonal rentals as vacationers are starting to second guess their trips to the Jersey Shore, causing a major strain on the state’s tourism industry. Since most of our members have chosen to operate as independent contractors, they do not have access to the unemployment safety net that is offered to millions or the recent wave of aid that has come from the government in response to COVID-19.

We believe that the next bill Congress considers for the ongoing pandemic should directly address relief and support for self-employed independent contractors. In this relief we believe Congress should pass forgivable SBA loans and implement a system of cash payments for the duration of the economy’s struggles from the outbreak. An SBA loan, even with zero interest rate will do the majority of independent contractors no good if they are unable to perform their work to pay the loan back. By offering forgivable loans, and basic income for the coming months, our self-employed independent contractors will be better equipped to get through these coming months.

NJ Realtors® applauds the Congress’s dedication to passing relief legislation in this time of crisis. As more and more industries slow down, and even halt, it is time that Congress begin to take action to protect independent contractors. The real estate industry is a massive part of the economy as a whole, and if we begin to see the industry and its many independent contractors begin to struggle, we will definitely see the rest of the economy experience turmoil. The longer the real estate industry and its agents go without relief, the closer we get to widespread economic devastation. If you were able to deliver long-term relief to independent contractors, the real estate industry would be able sustain this crisis and be ready to get back to full capacity, providing the power it does to the economy as a whole. NJ Realtors® understands that during the legislative process bills often change. I am asking that any bill considered by Congress ensure these provisions for independent contractors.

In a time of great uncertainty for our independent contractors, simple legislation would do wonders for them and the industry they service. Thank you for your consideration.

Best,



Angela Sicoli  
President, New Jersey Realtors®