

July 19, 2021

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

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

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

RE: Small businesses require infrastructure investments to recover from the pandemic

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and exacerbated the failing infrastructure systems we have in this country. Small businesses, particularly those in rural and low income areas, are stretched to their limit and struggling to access broadband when the world has gone virtual. At the same time, small business owners and their employees are struggling to afford healthcare during a health crisis, and to take care of their young and elderly family members.

Small businesses like ours are essential to the U.S. economy. There are 31.7 million small businesses in this country and we employ nearly half of the workforce, but we are struggling to rebuild in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Investing in outdated infrastructure systems will create a better foundation for small business recovery post-pandemic and will better prepare businesses to weather future crises. Additionally, small businesses and our employees need access to benefits that will help us compete and ensure employees have the resources they need to fully participate in the workforce.

To support small businesses in every corner of America, we need bold action. This includes prioritizing the following measures in the American Jobs Plan and American Families Plan:

- **Improving physical infrastructure:** Investing in our physical infrastructure supports access to customers and suppliers, enhances business operations and creates demand for the goods and services small businesses must sell.
- **Boosting broadband access:** The lack of broadband access for tribal and rural small businesses is a significant obstacle to conducting business. Additional investments for increasing rural broadband access would support growth for small businesses that need the Internet for access to markets, customers and operations support.
- **Providing access to important benefits and resources:** Small businesses and our employees need access to benefits and resources that will help keep us healthy and ensure we have the tools we need to compete for a talented workforce.
 - **Affordable healthcare:** Access to affordable, quality healthcare is one of the biggest barriers for small businesses, self-employed entrepreneurs and small business employees.

- **Paid family medical leave:** Small businesses often want to provide robust benefits like paid family leave to their employees but can't afford to do so on their own, putting small businesses on an unequal playing field with larger businesses that have more resources to attract and retain a talented workforce.
- **Child care:** The lack of access to affordable childcare has become increasingly more difficult and a significant burden to working parents during the pandemic.
- **Small business contracting standards:** While the federal government has small business contracting standards, they often do not even meet those minimum standards, thereby undercutting the small business ecosystem's potential. These minimums must be met and exceeded.

I urge you to act now to address these important infrastructure needs to support America's small businesses. This is the only way to ensure our businesses and our economy can recover from the unprecedented impacts of COVID-19.

Sincerely,

Fred Bolanos, President, ABM Insurance, San Dimas, California
 Dollene Jones, CEO, Abundance Worldwide Enterprises, Oakland, California
 Deus Jean-Francois, Accountant, Accountax, Brockton, Massachusetts
 Stephen Martin, Vice President, ACESA Cleaning Services, LLC, Buford, Georgia
 Debra Mclaurin, President, Adorable Babies Jump Start Corporation, Palmdale, California
 Michelle Spencer, Owner, Aging Well Care Management, Amherst, New York
 Susan Paul, Founder & CEO, Aim High SDC, Boston, Massachusetts
 Steven Politis, CEO, Alcott HR, Farmingdale, New York
 Alejandro Ordaz, Business Partner, Alejandro Ordaz, Mcallen, Texas
 Mohamed Omer, Owner, Alimama EA Catering LLC, Minneapolis, Minnesota
 Kori Saika Chen, Owner, Alkali Beverage Shop, Oakland, California
 Shanetha Pollnitz, CEO, Alpha and Omega Learning Center, Melrose Park, Illinois
 Gary Amerine, Owner, Amerine Systems Inc., Oakdale, California
 Lindo Arrindell, owner, Amicos exotic pizza, Dallas, Texas
 Richard Pallay, SVP Community Lending, AmPac TriState CDC, Grand Terrace, California
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 Milton Jones, President, APEX Digital Imaging, Tampa, Florida
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 Ashu Upa, CEO, Azuma Networks Inc., Anaheim, California
 Diane Holcomb, Owner, B & J Garage, Riverside, California

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Jacqueline Clisham, Owner, BigBash Management, Morris, Illinois
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Heidi Davies, Owner, Self, West Valley City, Utah
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