



Informs ■ Educates ■ Advocates

April 9, 2020

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-221 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Minority Leader Schumer:

Thank you for your continued leadership to combat the spread of the novel coronavirus and to provide relief from its impacts. As the Senate considers your HEROES legislation, we urge you to consider the critical role our funeral homes, mortuaries, cemeteries and crematories play in responding to pandemics. As you yourself said, "not all heroes wear capes." In the same vein, not all heroes are first responders, and so we respectfully ask that you include "last responders" in any emergency economic stimulus packages you enact.

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. Members of our organization are on the front lines dealing with the usual daily death rate; illnesses within their own families and staff; and additional COVID-19 deaths that may overload their capabilities.

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 non-licensed professionals work in our nation's funeral homes, mortuaries, 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.

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.

On behalf of the more than 140,000 "last responders" in the United States, we stand ready, as always, to care for the dead, the families left behind, and a grieving nation.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Christine Pepper".

Christine Pepper
CEO