ICYMI: New York Mayors Call for Federal Support to Stave Off Drastic Cuts

Albany, NY — Today, the New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials (NYCOM) hosted a press conference with local leaders from across the state to discuss need for urgent federal action to support New York municipalities impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. Mayors Robert Kennedy of Freeport, Richard David of Binghamton, Ben Walsh of Syracuse, and RuthAnn Loveless of Hamilton discussed the unique challenges their municipalities are facing due to the ongoing pandemic and why stalled negotiations in Congress must resume immediately in order to help communities in New York recover from the economic downturn caused by COVID-19.

To watch the full press conference, click here.

“The lost revenues we’re expecting are just astronomical – a total of about $4.4 million. We’re really hoping the rest of the country sees that it’s not the big cities, but the little municipalities who are needing the assistance out here. We need our representatives in Congress to afford us funding on the lost revenue side of the equation,” Freeport Mayor and NYCOM President Robert T. Kennedy said. “This isn’t a Republican or a Democrat issue, this is an issue for all of our residents and especially local municipalities. Let’s get this country moving again, and let’s help those local municipalities throughout the country.”

“Mayors did not create this situation – this is not a result of how cities are run. This is a national and international pandemic that has wreaked economic havoc in every community across the globe. Our finances were in very good shape prior to COVID-19, and the losses of revenues leave mayors with very few options,” Binghamton Mayor and NYCOM 1st Vice President Richard C. David said. “This money isn’t needed tomorrow, it was needed yesterday. For many cities large and small across the nation, they are already laying off police officers, firefighters, and employees in public works and so many other departments. This impacts our overall national economy.”

“Throughout this pandemic, our essential employees – our police officers, our firefighters, our sanitation workers – have been delivering the services and helping our communities and our country through this pandemic. When you look at what’s contributing to the financial challenges, it is literally a perfect storm of revenue constraints. The only way that we solve this issue is through the federal government providing direct aid to local governments,” Syracuse Mayor Ben Walsh said. “It is our essential workers that have helped us through this, it’s now time for Washington to step up and take care of the essential workers that have been taking care of all of us. There’s too much at stake to walk away. Now is the time to come back, to sit down, to rise above politics, and to meet this unprecedented crisis with unprecedented support.”
“Our municipality, along with all our local businesses, are holding on by our fingertips. I join my fellow mayors in urging support from our elected officials to provide us a lifeline – we are desperately in need of it,”

Hamilton Mayor RuthAnn Loveless said. “We need to join together nationally if we ever hope to return to a level of economic stability that we enjoyed pre-pandemic. I strongly urge that direct aid to municipalities be a component of the next aid package. We are all struggling, and survival will be dependent on this assistance.”

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The New York State Conference of Mayors and Municipal Officials (NYCOM) is an association of, and for, cities and villages in New York. Since 1910, NYCOM has united local government officials in an active statewide network focused on the singular purpose of finding the most effective means of providing essential municipal services. NYCOM’s membership represents more than 12 million New Yorkers.