



JEWELERS OF AMERICA

April 1, 2020

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
Senate Democratic Conference Secretary
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Conference Secretary Baldwin:

I'm writing on behalf of Jewelers of America, the largest fine jewelry trade association in the United States, representing both jewelry retailers and suppliers. As the nation watches the spread of the COVID-19 virus we are concerned about the impact of the outbreak in the U.S. and the necessary government action to help prevent further spreading.

If the U.S. Government takes the step of imposing emergency restrictions to fight the pandemic, we need to be ready to support the jewelry industry. Increasing numbers of our members have been forced to close their businesses on the state level. We are anticipating the real possibility that government will impose shutdowns on all non-essential operations to slow down the spread of COVID-19 in order to ensure healthcare providers are able to address the crisis. The jewelry industry, including all facets of retail, manufacturing and ancillary services are not considered essential operations. However, retail jewelers are important parts of their communities and their demise would have far-reaching economic impact.

In addition to supporting these businesses with the economic stimulus package, we ask that you take steps to protect those businesses that require the closure of jewelry operations. Specifically, we urge you to consider the following:

- 1) All relevant Federal/State or Local taxes; charges; levies; permits; licences or fines should be waived.
- 2) Federal legislation should be passed requiring that:
 - a. All commercial mortgage payments, loan arrangements, overdraft facilities, interest payments or other financial arrangements, charged by banks or any other lender, will be waived.
 - b. All private mortgage payments, loan arrangements, overdraft facilities, interest payments or other financial arrangements, charged by banks or any other lender, will be waived.
- 3) The Federal Government must also step in – as it did following the terrorist attacks of 9/11 – to assume the responsibility of virus coverage, which is currently excluded from Business Interruption coverage. This would help both businesses and insurers

who are not currently equipped to deal with the level of disruption created by COVID-19 and potential future pandemics.

These are the essential elements for survival of the jewelry industry in these difficult times. We hope you will seriously consider taking these and other steps to help jewelers navigate the current economic storm.

Sincerely,

David Bonaparte
President & CEO