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# CHURCH ALLIANCE

Acting on Behalf of Church Benefits Programs

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December 15, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
 Majority Leader  
 U.S. Senate  
 S-230 The Capitol  
 Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer  
 Minority Leader  
 U.S. Senate  
 S-221 The Capitol  
 Washington, DC 20510

Dear Leader McConnell and Leader Schumer:

On behalf of the Church Alliance, thank you for your leadership in helping to provide relief to churches and other religiously-affiliated organizations during these challenging times. As the nation continues to grapple with the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we urge you to approve a COVID-19 relief package and provide much needed support to these organizations before the end of the year.

The Church Alliance is a coalition of thirty-seven church benefits organizations that are affiliated with mainline and evangelical Protestant denominations, three Jewish entities, and Catholic schools and institutions. Church Alliance members provide employee benefits to approximately one million clergy, lay workers, and their families, serving over 155,000 churches, synagogues, and affiliated organizations, such as crisis centers, disaster aid organizations, schools, universities, early childhood centers, nursing homes, children's homes, homeless shelters, food banks, and other ministries.

Like many non-profits across the country, churches and religiously-affiliated organizations are struggling to care for the many individuals in need in their communities during this difficult time. Moreover, due to decreased charitable contributions and other revenues, churches and religiously-affiliated organizations are struggling to pay their employees who are ministering to their communities. We have appreciated Congress' support for this sector through various forms of relief provided as part of previous COVID-19 relief legislation, such as the Paycheck Protection Program and the Employee Retention Tax Credit.

As we enter this holiday season, we urge you to approve a COVID-19 relief package and provide needed relief to churches and religiously-affiliated organizations so they can continue to support their clergy, lay workers, and their families. In particular, we request that you extend the

Paycheck Protection Program and provide continued support through the Employee Retention Tax Credit. In addition, as churches navigate the path to recovery and reopening, we urge that you provide them with COVID-19 liability protection as well as tax incentives to help offset the costs of modifications to workplaces to help protect the health and safety of our workers. Finally, we urge your support in ensuring that faith communities retain access to their employer-provided health care by extending to church plans any relief provided for employer-provided health plans, such as continuation coverage for employees who have lost their jobs.

Thank you for your time and consideration of these important issues to churches and religiously-affiliated organizations' employees and their families. We are happy to speak with you and answer any questions you may have and look forward to continuing to work with you in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James F. Sanft". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "S".

James F. Sanft  
Chair of the Church Alliance