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VIA FEDERAL EXPRESS

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of New York State
New York State Capitol Building
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Your daily briefings are already legendary, as they keep New Yorkers informed of the assault upon us by the coronavirus (COVID-19) and how we must modify our behavior to “flatten the curve.” We are the epicenter of the current COVID-19 public health crisis in the United States. According to your briefings, as of early April 2020, there have been more than 138,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in New York and more than 17,000 patients are currently hospitalized, with over 4,500 in intensive care. Already, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of more than 6,200 New Yorkers. As you well know, given the ease of transmission and latency of this virus, it is expected that the tragic impact upon New Yorkers will significantly exceed these statistics. Our healthcare system is stretched to the brink.

In this unprecedented crisis, our heartfelt thanks go out to New York’s frontline workers, including doctors, nurses, hospital staff, emergency medical technicians, police officers and fire fighters as they continue to put their lives at great risk to save ours. Nobody has risen to the challenge, or given more than New York’s frontline workers, despite working unending shifts under battlefield conditions.

Although there is limited public information regarding the rate of infection among New York’s frontline workers, some have lost their lives, and many have become sick, while attending to COVID-19 patients. The situation is fluid and of unknown duration. The toll this crisis will take on New York’s frontline workers (indeed, on all New Yorkers) cannot be predicted with certainty at this time.

One thing, however, is certain – for what they have given, and for what they have sacrificed, day-by-harrowing-day – New York’s frontline workers deserve our full and unrelenting support, which must not end when this crisis subsides.

As our community slowly returns to normal, we must not forget those frontline workers who have died, become sick or permanently disabled. Although Senator Schumer's advocacy for a "Hero's Fund" is admirable, it leaves behind the most important funding – funding for the families of those frontline workers who have lost their lives and for those frontline workers who have suffered physical and psychological damage while battling COVID-19 on behalf of New York.

New York has faced crises before where frontline workers have risked their health and lives to protect fellow New Yorkers. After 9/11, a substantial fund was established to provide compensation for those workers and their families. Here, too, frontline workers and their families are entitled to compensation.

The time has come for our government to establish a medical compensation fund for today's frontline workers. While the details and scope of such a fund cannot be determined until the aftermath of the current crisis, the need for this fund is of paramount importance. We must stand with New York's frontline workers and their families, not just in our time of crisis, but also in their time of need.

It is, therefore, with my most sincere admiration for how you have responded to this crisis that I call upon you to spearhead the establishment of a medical compensation fund for New York's frontline workers.

Respectfully yours,



STUART L. FINZ