



February 24, 2021

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
United States House
1236 Longworth H.O.B.
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Majority Leader
United States Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Leader Schumer, Leader McCarthy, and Leader McConnell:

We write to urge you to work together with President Joe Biden to support the American Rescue Plan Act, which will provide vital assistance to our members, as well as to all hardworking Americans. We thank you for your work over the past year to support our members and our industry as the United States has endured the COVID-19 health and economic crisis.

However, as you know, the American economy, including the film and television industry, remains at less than full strength. Across the country, many families continue to struggle to with the costs of rent, food, and healthcare—and the harsh winter storms of recent weeks have only heightened the crisis for vulnerable populations and frontline workers. The American Rescue Plan Act will provide much needed relief for the current crisis and address long-standing vulnerabilities in our economy.

Our members live, work, and retire in all fifty states. Despite popular media portrayals, red-carpet celebrities are a tiny fraction of our membership, the vast majority of whom serve in lesser known roles such as assistant directors, costume designers, background actors, hair and makeup artists, set builders, and sound and lighting technicians. Our industry supports 2.5 million U.S. jobs and 320,000 businesses in cities and small towns across the country. As guilds and unions, we have negotiated strong collective bargaining agreements that allow our members to earn decent wages, a secure pension, and high-quality healthcare. Due to these agreements, our industry provides a pathway to the middle class for working people of all levels of skill and education.

The American Rescue Plan Act contains vital help for our members, and we urge its prompt passage. Among its most important provisions are:

- Increasing the federal weekly COVID-19 unemployment supplement to \$400;
- Extending the COVID-19 unemployment programs (Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation program and Mixed Earner Unemployment Compensation) through the end of August;
- Partially subsidizing COBRA premiums, so that members who have not yet returned to work can remain on our multi-employer health plans and temporarily expanding healthcare subsidies under the Affordable Healthcare Act for those not eligible for COBRA;
- Delivering long-needed support to troubled pension plans and the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation, without jeopardizing healthy pension plans like ours;
- Providing direct payments of \$1,400 to most Americans, bringing the total relief to \$2,000 following December's \$600 payments; and
- Ensuring that labor unions and guilds can apply for Paycheck Protection Program forgivable loans so that we can continue to provide important support and assistance to our members, despite significant COVID-19-related decline in revenues.

When paired with other important provisions included in the American Rescue Plan Act, these policy changes serve to make significant strides in the right direction for working-class Americans. We urge you to act promptly to enact the American Rescue Plan Act now.

Sincerely,



Russell Hollander
National Executive Director
Directors Guild of America



David P. White
National Executive Director
SAG-AFTRA



Matthew D. Loeb
International President
International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees

Cc:

The Honorable Joe Biden, President of the United States
The United States Senate

The Directors Guild of America (DGA) represents more than 18,000 directors and members of the directorial team, including Directors, Assistant Directors, Unit Production Managers, Associate Directors, Stage Managers and Production Associates, working in film, television, commercials, documentaries, news, sports and new media. On behalf of its members, the Guild negotiates industry-wide agreements governing minimum compensation, pension and health benefits, working conditions, creative rights, and duties of DGA members. To learn more, visit <https://www.dga.org/>.

The International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees, Moving Picture Technicians, Artists and Allied Crafts (IATSE) is a labor organization representing over 150,000 members working in all forms of live theater, motion picture and television production, trade shows and exhibitions, television broadcasting, and concerts as well as the equipment and construction shops that support all these areas of the entertainment industry. We represent virtually all the behind-the-scenes workers in crafts ranging from motion picture animator to theater usher. To learn more, visit <https://www.iatse.net/>.

The Screen Actors Guild-American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (SAG-AFTRA) represents approximately 160,000 actors, recording artists, singers, announcers, broadcast journalists, dancers, DJs, news writers, news editors, program hosts, puppeteers, stunt performers, voiceover artists and other entertainment and media professionals. SAG-AFTRA members are the faces and voices that entertain and inform America and the world. A proud affiliate of the AFL-CIO, SAG-AFTRA has national offices in Los Angeles and New York and local offices nationwide representing members working together to secure the strongest protections for entertainment and media artists into the 21st century and beyond. Visit SAG-AFTRA online at sagaftra.org.