

THE NEW ENGLAND COUNCIL

June 23, 2020

Dear New England Senator,

On behalf of The New England Council, I write to express our support for reasonable, time limited liability legislation to protect New England businesses from unwarranted lawsuits related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on feedback from our members across a range of industries, we believe that these types of protections are needed to ensure the region's essential businesses that remained open during the pandemic are not penalized for their service, and to allow our region's other businesses to re-open in a safe and timely manner.

The New England Council's membership includes businesses large and small representing a variety of industries, including energy, financial services, health and long term care, higher education, technology, telecommunications, and transportation--all of which have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic in different ways. Some continued to provide critical services throughout the crisis despite significant challenges, including the lack of protective equipment and an evolving understanding of the virus. Those businesses should not now be threatened with costly litigation. Additionally, as businesses across the six New England states begin the process of re-opening their facilities to their employees and to the public, the need for reasonable, temporary protections against lawsuits is critical. Congress should provide a safe harbor for businesses following public health guidance and taking reasonable precautions during this unprecedented time. We recognize that there are some concerns about such protections for industry leaving individuals without recourse, but we believe language can be crafted that protects both interests.

Furthermore, over the summer months, it is expected that the region's tourism industry will gradually recover and Americans from all over the country will begin visiting their favorite vacation spots throughout New England. This anticipated influx of visitors further underscores the need to protect our workers and businesses where they are complying with public health guidance issued in their state.

The New England Council and our members thank you for your ongoing leadership and advocacy on behalf of our region during this incredibly challenging time. We will continue to gather feedback from our members as this situation continues to unfold in the coming weeks and may be in touch with further recommendations as the crisis continues to evolve and new issues arise. If you or your staff have any questions or would like additional information on any of the items discussed above, please don't hesitate to contact us.

Sincerely,



James T. Brett
President & CEO

The New England Council

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