



136 S. Bronough Street
Tallahassee, FL 32301
Phone: (850) 521-1200
Fax: (850) 521-1203

www.floridachamber.com

April 30, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

RE: Support Common Sense Liability Shields for Job Creators in Future COVID Relief Packages

Dear Majority Leader McConnell:

As the state of Florida and our country continue to grapple with the COVID-19 global pandemic and the serious impacts it is causing to our collective health and economy, I want to thank you for your ongoing leadership in this time of crisis.

Having seen the early successes of flattening the curve of COVID-19 cases in Florida, the Florida Chamber of Commerce is working closely with Governor Ron DeSantis to reopen Florida's economy, which if it were a country would be the 17th largest economy in the world. As we move from the "Relief" to the "Reopen and Recovery" phases of this process, the need is self-evident for significant and comprehensive liability shields for frontline healthcare heroes, essential businesses that have responded to this crisis and those businesses beginning to open their doors for the first time in weeks.

As the leader of the Florida Chamber's Litigation and Regulatory Reform Center, I took great interest and heart when I saw your recent statements about the need for liability protections for businesses in the next federal coronavirus relief package:

"Our response must not be slowed, weakened or exploited to set up the biggest trial lawyer bonanza in history."

We agree that those necessary liability protections must be, as you put it, "*a red line*" for the next bill in order to avoid heaping "*an avalanche of lawsuits*" from plaintiffs' lawyers on those who have already been sent federal relief in the form of taxpayer dollars to help restart our beleaguered economy.

Our members have long been saddled with an otherwise competitive business climate weighed down by rampant lawsuit abuse. Despite boasting world renowned beaches, a leading education system and top five tax climate, Florida has the fifth *worst* legal climate in the nation, according to our partners at the U.S Chamber's Institute for Legal Reform. To further compound matters, Florida's job creators are likely facing an approaching tsunami of frivolous litigation stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Securing Florida's Future

Florida is very fortunate to have Senators Marco Rubio and Rick Scott serving our state in the United States Senate. The Florida Chamber and our members have benefited from the close partnership over many years of Senator Rubio as a former Speaker of the Florida House of Representatives and Senator Scott as former Governor of Florida in our shared mission to enhance Florida's business climate, create jobs and opportunity and increase our state's global competitiveness. Like them, we stand alongside you, ready to engage in any way necessary, to help realize your stated goals of **bringing some certainty to the legal liability threat and provide protections for businesses of all shapes and sizes** as they attempt to re-open their doors, provide valuable goods and services to their communities, and pay their employees.

Thank you for your service to our great nation. The Florida Chamber of Commerce remains committed to working with you and your colleagues to ensure America emerges from this challenging time stronger than ever.

Sincerely,



David A. Hart
Executive Vice President

cc: The Honorable Marco Rubio
The Honorable Rick Scott
Mark Wilson, President & CEO, Florida Chamber of Commerce
Charles Caulkins, Chair, Florida Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors
Harold Kim, President, U.S. Chamber Institute for Legal Reform