

Legislative Report to the
AFM Southern Conference of Locals
June 27 & 28, 2020

The United States is facing a three-fold crisis:

- A Public Health Pandemic
- A Full Scale, Global Economic Free-fall
- Long Term Structural Racism

As an institution, the AFM has been heavily impacted by the social and economic downside of each of these phenomena.

We have worked hard not only to confront these issues head on but to work a plan that addresses each of them.

As both the Government Relations Director and the Director of Diversity, my office has worked with President Hair, and members of Congress to effect meaningful legislation that positively addresses legislative answers to these matters. In addition, I have worked closely with AFM Secretary-Treasurer Jay Blumenthal and the AFL-CIO, and with the AFM Diversity Committee Chaired by Local 65-699 President Lovie Smith-Wright to develop a balanced statement and plan of action to address the racial unrest systemically perpetuated by some in this country and recently precipitated by the death of George Floyd in Minneapolis.

From labor's point of view, this tragic period in our lives can only be resolved through working with Congress, which started with the CARES Act to address the five economic essentials espoused by the labor movement:

- KEEP America healthy—protect and expand health insurance for all workers:
- KEEP front-line workers safe and secure:
- KEEP workers employed and protect earned pension checks:
- KEEP state and local governments, our public schools and the U.S. Postal Service solvent and working:
- KEEP America competitive—hire people to build infrastructure:

As noted previously, my office works with large, effective coalitions to accomplish our work. No coalition has been more important than the AFL-CIO Legislative Department and the Arts, Entertainment, and Media Industries (AEMI) Committee of the Department for Professional Employees of which the AFM is a member and Sec.-Treas. Jay Blumenthal sits on the DPE executive board.

DPE activities have centered around:

IMMIGRATION-

- The AFM just this week penned a letter led by President Hair to the House Homeland Security Committee and the House Appropriations Committee supporting additional funding for USCIS to

avert furloughs and remain open through the end of 2020. Issue: Continuation of AFM distribution of consultation letters for incoming artists and American artists traveling abroad.

CARES Act- HR 748

- AFM Lobbied with DPE affiliates and successfully lobbied the inclusion of unemployment access to pandemic assistance/UI payments to part time and gig economy workers who normally do not receive W-2 wages
- Successfully lobbied to include additional funds for the National Endowment while laying out arts and entertainment issues to be funded. Unsuccessful in this round.
- Signed into law, HR 748, by President Trump on March 27, 2020

HEROES Act- HR 6800

- Passed the House on 5/15/2020 by a vote of 208-199
- Extends UI Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation until December 31, 2020 (\$1200 + \$2400)
- Provides 100% COBRA coverage/payments- Sanchez introduced
- Contains multiemployer retirement provisions
- Paycheck Protection Loans for Small businesses
- Moratorium on evictions and foreclosures
- Eliminated nonprofit organization sub-granting from the legislation (Hair and Blumenthal)

Stalled in the Senate, which is attempting to develop its own pandemic legislation. McConnell and Trump indicated that this bill would be “dead on arrival”. This has yet to be seen.

President Hair signed onto a letter to Congress outlining entertainment union’s priorities for the HEROES Act.

POLICING IN THE UNITED STATES:

The George Floyd Justice in Policing Act- HR 7120

Passed the House 6/25/2020 by a vote of 236-181

- Amends the Qualified Immunity Act
- Bans the Chokehold
- Establishes a National Registry on Police Misconduct
- Imposes new restrictions on the use of deadly force

In response to the tragic circumstances surrounding recent killing and riots, AFM President Hair developed and e-blasted a statement decrying racism, violence, and police brutality. And, the AFM Diversity Committee publishes an extensive statement on the issues of “Black Lives Matter” and racial injustice in the US in the July 2020 edition of the International Musician.