

Item # 100₍₃₎

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Regular Meeting

JUNE 16, 2020

SUBMITTED AT THE REQUEST OF

**COMMISSIONER LAMAR
FISHER**

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 15, 2020

Mayor Dale Holness
Broward County Government Center
115 South Andrews Ave.
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Mayor Dale Holness:

As the Members of Congress who represent Broward County in the U.S. House of Representatives, we write to urge the County to expeditiously transfer adequate funding from the County's Coronavirus Relief Fund transfer payment to the municipality governments that comprise the County. As you know, the budgets of local governments have been hit hard by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It is imperative that the political subdivisions of the County receive their share of the Fund so that they may deliver necessary governmental services to their residents and continue to coordinate COVID-19 response efforts in the most efficient manner possible.

As a reminder, the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES), signed into law on March 27, 2020, established the Coronavirus Relief Fund to provide direct financial assistance to state and local governments. Congress included this \$150 billion fund to help states and local governments deal with the significant fiscal challenges presented by the ongoing pandemic. Payments from the Fund may be used for necessary expenditures that are incurred due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

CARES provides for direct payments from the U.S. Department of the Treasury to units of local government with populations of at least 500,000. Although we take issue with the inclusion of this population threshold in CARES, it was the result of a hard-fought compromise with Senate Republicans and the administration. We are already working to remedy this funding structure and provide additional state and local direct assistance in the next piece of COVID-19 relief legislation, the HEROES Act.

Because Broward qualifies and applied for direct assistance, the Treasury allocated \$340,744,702.30 out of Florida's \$8.3 billion share of the Fund to Broward. Unfortunately, since none of the units of local government within the County have a population of at least 500,000, none of the municipalities within Broward were eligible for direct payments from the Treasury.

Furthermore, on June 10, 2020, Governor DeSantis announced that the State of Florida would distribute an initial disbursement of \$1.275 billion out of Florida's Fund payment to county governments with a population below 500,000. Fund transfers from this disbursement will not be directed to municipal governments.

In the announcement of this initial disbursement, Governor DeSantis directed “All counties, including counties that already received direct payment” to “provide funds to municipalities located within their jurisdiction.” In doing so, the Governor’s office made clear that the State of Florida intends for county governments to transfer at least some of the funding they receive to their political subdivisions.

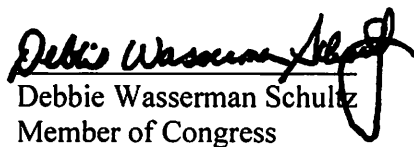
Moreover, when passing the CARES Act, Congress fully intended for municipal governments to be beneficiaries of Fund transfer payments. The law directed payments to state governments and units of local government of at least 500,000 only to facilitate the prompt distribution of funds. The law envisioned that larger governmental entities would provide transfer payments to smaller ones on a population basis in order to expedite distribution.

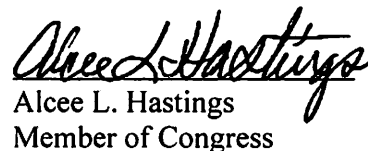
In order to maximize efficiency and efficacy, it is important that the County distribute a share of its direct payment to the municipalities within its jurisdiction. About two million Floridians call Broward County home. To ensure that the County is meeting the needs of its residents and is continuing to respond to COVID-19 in a timely fashion, it will be necessary to utilize our municipalities’ resources, workforces, and existing logistical chains. A partnership between Broward and our municipal governments is needed so that city employees and first responders can continue to help people in the most effective way. It is also important to provide personal protective equipment to city employees and first responders in the most efficient manner possible.

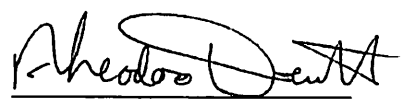
Therefore, as Members of Congress who represent Broward and helped pass the CARES Act, we request that the County allocate at least 30 percent of its \$340 million direct payment to the municipalities within its jurisdiction. Failing to provide these funds would fly in the face of the intent of CARES and could cause unnecessary delays in COVID-19 response efforts.

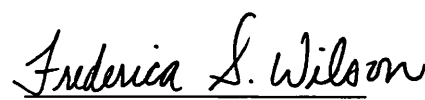
Thank you for your consideration of our concerns.

Sincerely,


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress


Ted Deutch
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress