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September 22, 2020

Lawrence J. Hogan Jr.
Governor
State of Maryland
100 State Circle
Annapolis, MD 21401

Dear Governor Hogan,

Thank you again for your diligence in addressing the impact of COVID-19 on the state of Maryland.

Unemployment is a vital lifeline for many citizens, and tens of thousands of Marylanders have had a tremendously difficult time accessing these vital benefits for a number of reasons. My office alone has responded to more than 2800 requests for help from Marylanders who had to turn to their Congressman in order to help them access this lifeline. Secretary Robinson and I worked closely together during this challenging time, and I thank her for her dedication to ensuring Marylanders are able to weather the pandemic. While much work remains to ensure that every Marylander can access the benefits they have earned in a timely manner, Secretary Robinson's ongoing efforts must be lauded, and I appreciate the work she has done for all of my constituents. During our many calls, she has been responsive and helpful.

I write today regarding the IKEA U.S. Community Foundation's decision to provide a reimbursement to the state of Maryland for the unemployment compensation provided to their workers during the COVID-19 crisis. It is heartening to see their concern and dedication to the wellbeing of both their employees and the community.

Unfortunately, I am still hearing from a number of my constituents that they have yet to receive unemployment benefits after months of waiting. Many of our constituents are still waiting to have a fact-finding interview scheduled for their claim. While I understand that these fact-finding interviews are a necessary requirement for the claims process, many of the individuals I have

been assisting have been waiting weeks, if not months, for an interview to be scheduled. This backlog has created undue financial hardship for many of my constituents. Their families, homes, cars, and lives depend on this one simple administrative task. This backlog is unacceptable, and should be addressed as quickly as possible.

The IKEA Foundation indicated in their letter that they would like to see these funds used for the greatest public benefit. Based on the significant financial hardship the wait time for fact-finding interviews has caused, reinvesting some or all of this funding towards additional staffing to quickly address this backlog would be a tremendous benefit for many Marylanders waiting to receive this vital lifeline.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "David Trone". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent initial "D" and a long, sweeping tail.

David Trone
Member of Congress