

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

May 5, 2020

Dear Governor Ivey:

As the State of Alabama considers how to disburse the \$1.78 billion allocated under the Coronavirus Relief Fund (“Fund”), I write to encourage you to prioritize public health assistance to our smaller cities and counties that are on the forefront of combatting the pandemic.

The funding allocated to states and large localities under the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act* is sorely needed as this public health crisis continues and the economic fallout intensifies. Congress intended for these resources to be used for fighting the spread of the virus at every level, and this includes the deployment of funds to communities that do not meet the population threshold for direct allocations from the Fund. It is incumbent on our State to work with these local governments to identify gaps in our public health infrastructure and strategically allocate these funds to address their needs, including the widespread deployment of testing and contact tracing.

The local disbursement of these funds is especially critical for our historically underserved and rural communities. The COVID-19 outbreak has disproportionately impacted our towns and counties across Alabama’s Black Belt, and these localities have fewer resources to bolster their public health infrastructure. Stopping the spread of the virus is dependent on our most vulnerable populations having access to the services and information outlined under federal guidance for the Fund, and our local governments are well positioned to be a key partner in this fight if provided with adequate resources.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter, and I look forward to continuing to work with your office on a coordinated effort to combat the pandemic.

Sincerely,



Doug Jones
United States Senator



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Cc: State Senate Pro Tempore Del Marsh
State Senate Majority Leader Greg Reed
State Senate Minority Leader Bobby Singleton
State House Speaker Mac McCutcheon
State House Minority Leader Anthony Daniels