



SUSSEX COUNTY BOARD OF CHOSEN FREEHOLDERS

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Freeholder Herb Yardley

County of Sussex

April 6, 2020

Hon. Mike Pence
Office of the Vice President of the United States
1 Observatory Circle,
U.S. Naval Observatory,
Washington, D.C. 20392

Dear Vice President Pence:

I am a member of the Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders in Sussex County, New Jersey. In case you don't know what that is, a Freeholder is an elected position similar to a County Commissioner in most states. I am currently finishing my first term, having served the county prior to this as the Health Officer/Administrator of the Sussex County Division of Health. Before retiring, I was employed as a public health management professional for nearly 40 years.

Last week, United States Senators Robert Menendez and Cory Booker put out a press release which they titled, *Menendez, Booker Announce First Wave of Federal Funding for NJ from the COVID-19 Emergency Stimulus Package. Over \$82M in grants to assist communities on the frontlines of the coronavirus outbreak.* You can read the full press release here:

<https://www.menendez.senate.gov/news-and-events/press/menendez-booker-announce-first-wave-of-federal-funding-for-nj-from-the-covid-19-emergency-stimulus-package>

Four of New Jersey's 21 counties received no aid. Not a penny. Together, those four counties have as many COVID-19 cases/deaths as New Mexico, and more than 12 entire *states*.

Sussex County, my county, was one of those four counties. According to the release by our United States Senators, we are getting none of the money to *assist communities on the frontlines of the coronavirus outbreak*.

Sussex County is a commuter county. Seventy percent of our people work outside of the county. Many commute to New York City. New York City is the epicenter of this world pandemic. No money? Not a penny?

Congressman Josh Gottheimer, who represents the majority of municipalities in Sussex County, has attempted to explain this with letters and press releases. As I understand it, Congress used a pre-pandemic, Obama-era aid formula to determine the funding allocation. I understand that this was part of the compromise reached with Speaker Nancy Pelosi. According to Congressman Gottheimer, throughout the country there are other counties in the same predicament as we are. It has been suggested that these counties are in more "Republican areas", although why politics would be a consideration in allocating resources to fight a pandemic is beyond me.

As such, I am appealing to you Mr. Vice President, as the head of the Coronavirus Task Force, to please cut through the bureaucracy and formulas and just consider the facts: We are a hard-hit New York City commuter county. Our rural population is just as vulnerable to the devastation of this virus, and time is of the essence.

I am joined below by my fellow freeholders in this request for your assistance. Any guidance and relief you may provide would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,



Herb Yardley,
Member, Sussex County Board of Chosen Freeholders

Sylvia Petillo,
Freeholder Director
Dawn Fantasia
Freeholder Deputy Director
Josh Hertzberg
Freeholder
Anthony Fasano
Freeholder