

U.S. Rep. Kind: Introduces legislation to protect independent music and entertainment venues through COVID-19

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Washington, DC — Today, **Rep. Ron Kind** (D-WI) and **Rep. Mike Kelly** (R-PA) introduced the *Entertainments New Credit Opportunity for Relief & Economic Sustainability (ENCORES) Act*. This bipartisan legislation would support independent music and entertainment venues as they work to survive the COVID-19 crisis. The COVID-19 and the necessary response to combat the spread of the disease is continuing to drastically impact Wisconsin's artistic venues who, without any source of revenue or large corporate backers, are at risk of not being able to re-open after issuing refunds for canceled events. As spaces for indoor, large gatherings - arts venues were the first to close and will be the last to re-open.

This comes as a direct response from Rep. Kind after a constituent of his, Jason Anderson, Executive Director of the nonprofit Pablo Center in Eau Claire, reached out to Rep. Kind's office with concerns. In May, Congressman Kind [announced his intention](#) to work with the industry to address this problem by addressing disaster loss rules to ensure independent venues are not shut out.

"As the first to close and last to open, independent art centers- like the Pablo Center here in Western Wisconsin - across the country are at risk of closing," said **Rep. Ron Kind**. "In this time of such uncertainty and darkness, we cannot allow the light of the arts to go out. I am proud of the work we've done to put together a bipartisan proposal to help gems like the Pablo Center continue to thrive when this crisis ends."

“The pandemic has us all thinking. This is a good thing, as we can determine what progress can come from it. There are social and environmental issues that are finally taking a front seat in our minds. However, we also reflect on the blessings we’re missing out on; the chance to gather and celebrate life through music,” said **Justin Vernon of Bon Iver**. “Our venues are in grave trouble. Thus, we support Congressman Ron Kind and the State of Wisconsin as they work to protect music venues. With this bill, and once we put the pandemic behind us, there will be new opportunities for us to change and grow together in our sacred venues in the light of music.”

“Our creative economy is vital to any thriving economy, and ticketed venues are a crucial thread in the tapestry of our national economy. These venues foster and support the careers of artists at every level. For every \$1 spent on a ticket in a live venue, another \$12 is spent in the surrounding businesses,” said **Jason Anderson, Executive Director of the Pablo Center at the Confluence**. “Congressman Kind has helped these venues, by authoring a crucial piece of lasting legislation, at a most desperate hour and has worked tirelessly to Save-Our-Stages. The threat to these venues remains real, independent venues were among the first to close in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and will be the last to open, 90% of venues are on the verge of going extinct nationwide. This tax credit is one of the ways Congress is working to ensure these venues are still here to deliver their vital missions and continue to provide transformative entertainment within the communities they serve.”

“Venues across the 16th district are closed because of the coronavirus pandemic, including UPMC Park, home of the SeaWolves, and countless music halls and theaters. These entertainment centers are part of every community’s identity, but state mandates have created financial hardship and put them at risk of permanent closure. The bipartisan legislation Congressman Kind and I introduced today will help these small town cultural centers survive these unprecedented times so they can re-open to hard-working western Pennsylvanians in the future,” said **Rep. Mike Kelly**

The *ENCORES Act* will allow music venues to recoup some of the loses they have experienced due to ticket refunds from canceled events by:

- Providing a tax credit for 50% of the value for refunded tickets
- Eligible business are ones that promote, produce, or manage: live concerts, comedy shows, sporting events, and live theatrical productions

- Eligible businesses must have 500 or fewer eligible employees; and
- Businesses must have offered a voucher to customers first, and customers opted for a refund instead, in order to get the credit.

The text of the bill can be found [here](#).

Rep. Kind is a member of the Ways and Means Committee, the most powerful – and the oldest – committee in the House of Representatives. It has jurisdiction over tax measures, the management of public debt, trade and tariff laws, Social Security, Medicare, pensions, and many other economic growth measures.