



July 25, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell  
Majority Leader  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell:

On behalf of the Software & Information Industry Association (SIIA), we write to urge Congress to ensure that software and information technology is leveraged in the next coronavirus (COVID-19) economic relief package to ensure that federal aid gets to its intended recipients. We request that Congress ensure that state governments and federal agencies receive the necessary resources to leverage technology to prevent criminal operations and fraudsters from stealing federal aid from the people that need it most.

SIIA is the principal trade association of the software and information industries and represents over 800 companies that develop and market software and digital content for business, education, consumers, the Internet, and entertainment. SIIA's members range from start-up firms to some of the largest and most recognizable corporations in the world.

The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) strain has had a significant public health and economic impact on the United States. Congress has acted quickly to try to provide economic relief to individuals and businesses that have been impacted at no fault of their own. This has taken the form of direct payments to Americans, unemployment insurance supplemental payments, benefits through the Supplemental Assistance Nutrition Program (SNAP), and business continuity loans.

Unfortunately, criminal enterprises and fraudsters have sought to steal federal emergency aid from those who need it the most. On April 14, the FBI and the Secret Service issued a joint OpEd regarding the criminal threats to federal aid that states "The implementation of the \$2 trillion Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act will provide even more criminal opportunities. Fraudsters around the world are already developing methods to steal the critical

financial support intended for communities, companies, and individuals.” On May 26, the Department of Labor distributed a memo that concluded “The Office of Inspector General (OIG) believes state’s reliance on self-certifications alone to ensure eligibility for [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance] will lead to increased improper payments and fraud.” Efforts by criminal organizations have targeted multiple states and have utilized stolen identities in order to defraud state and federal programs out of billions of dollars of support for the Americans that need it most.

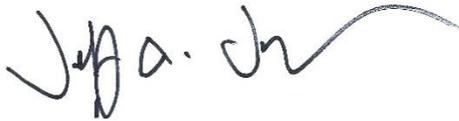
The need for increased vigilance to identify and prevent fraud comes at a time when state and local budgets are strained to meet the public health and economic needs of those impacted by COVID-19. While they fill the critical need to provide federal unemployment aid and other services to its citizens, states, and federal agencies have not been provided with funds to identify and prevent fraud. In order to ensure the best use of taxpayer dollars, Congress should:

- Amend Title III of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. §502(a)) to make state administrative expenses to identify and prevent fraud in unemployment insurance program eligible for federal reimbursement;
- Amend the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance Program, Amending the Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation, and Pandemic Emergency Unemployment Compensation to make state administrative expenses to identify and prevent fraud in unemployment insurance program eligible for federal reimbursement;
- Make “fraud control” a 100 percent reimbursable administrative expense for state operating agencies distributing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits;
- Appropriate funds to the USDA Office of the Inspector General to help identify and prevent fraud in the administration of the food assistance provided in response to the coronavirus;
- Appropriate funds to the Department of Treasury to use technology to identify and prevent waste, fraud and abuse in the recovery rebate checks to individuals, including to prevent checks from going to the deceased;
- Direct the Treasury Special Inspector General for Pandemic Recovery to identify and prevent waste, fraud, and abuse in recovery rebate checks to individuals and make recommendations to the Department of Treasury;
- Provide the Small Business Administration with the authority to use up to one percent of the funds appropriated to the Paycheck Protection Program to identify and prevent waste, fraud and abuse in the administration of the loans.

During this trying time, Americans needs full and immediate support from the programs they depend on to make ends meet. Congress should ensure that software and information technology can be leveraged to seamlessly prevent criminals and fraudsters from interfering with the distribution of aid to the people that need them the most.

We thank you for your attention to these important issues and we look forward to serving as a resource for you as Congress continues to provide relief to Americans during the COVID pandemic.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Joseph", with a long, sweeping flourish extending to the right.

Jeff Joseph

President and CEO

SIIA