Dear Neighbor:

Over the next several weeks, COVID-19 will impact our city’s economy as scores of establishments are already feeling the hit. Now is the time to save those businesses.

Read my call to action in today’s New York Post: New York state needs to throw our bars and restaurants an urgent lifeline

In my op-ed, I call for three immediate action items:

- Postpone or eliminate the sales tax for businesses due tomorrow, March 20. A tax holiday would help businesses cover immediate expenses.

- Repeal or modify the Commercial Rent Tax that impacts Manhattan businesses, particularly those hit hardest by the loss of tourism.

- It is also a time to be creative. Workers must be able to support themselves: with the assistance of the federal government, the city should help those that are out of work with one-time grants. This should be targeted first and foremost to those who have been forced to be unemployed.

Today, I joined City Council Speaker Corey Johnson in announcing a robust proposal that helps provide a lifeline to businesses. The proposal expands eligibility for unemployment, covers fixed costs for businesses, institutes a grants program, delays the upcoming sales tax period, and more. You can read details here.

How You Can Help:

- Support neighborhood businesses by ordering delivery or takeout
- Buy a gift card for businesses that are impacted
- Encourage local businesses to visit the Small Business Services (SBS) website for assistance
My office is monitoring volunteer opportunities for organizations who need support. While we encourage you to exercise an abundance of caution, Citymeals on Wheels, God’s Love We Deliver, and other emergency food organizations have informed my office that they are looking for assistance. If you would like to get involved, please reach out to my office at kpowers@council.nyc.gov.

Please stay safe and e-mail my office if you need anything. We are here to help

Keith

For further updates, please reference the following resources from various agencies:

- News from the Mayor’s Office
- Department of Health, includes multiple guidance documents
- Department of Education
- Small Business Services, includes financial aid program information
- Office of Emergency Management
- Text COVID to 692-692 for updates from Notify NYC. For Spanish speakers, text COVIDESP to 692-692.