

October 19, 2020

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

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representative
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi and Minority Leaders Schumer and McCarthy:

As Americans face economic uncertainty, we are launching a new initiative to reduce the number of American households operating outside the financial mainstream. Together, the American Bankers Association and the Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund – working with the nation’s core-service providers – will make it possible for banks to offer [Bank On-certified accounts](#) at nationwide scale. The attached press release provides additional detail.

Sustainable economic opportunity requires a long-term banking relationship, but according to the [FDIC’s data](#) updated just today, 7.1 million Americans are entirely unbanked. Notably, approximately 14% of Black households and 12% of Hispanic households did not have bank accounts in 2019, compared to white households, whose unbanked rate has dropped to below 3%. While these rates have declined over time, as a nation and as an industry, we can do better.

Bank On helps solve this problem by connecting consumers to high-quality, low fee accounts. First inspired by the FDIC’s Safe Account Pilot, the Bank On [National Account Standards](#) were created by the [CFE Fund](#) and are widely endorsed by both consumer advocates and banking industry leaders. Being banked matters: as the government rushed to distribute millions of Economic Impact Payments during the COVID-19 pandemic, the FDIC, the IRS, Bank On and the ABA worked to promote awareness of such accounts so American taxpayers could receive their payments quickly and securely. The FDIC is continuing its efforts through its [#getbanked campaign](#).

Encouraging banks to offer a Bank On-certified account – and making it easy for them to do so – can have an impact at enormous scale. We are working with our nation’s core providers, which provide the operational backbone behind many banks, to simplify the process for their bank customers to create and offer accounts that meet Bank On standards.

In sharing this exciting news, we also invite you to join our effort. In communities across America, [local Bank On coalitions](#) – which bring together government agencies, financial institutions and community organizations – are working to ensure that your constituents understand that there is a place for them in the mainstream banking system. We look forward to working with you to get more Americans banked and to create a strong foundation for shared prosperity.

Sincerely,



Rob Nichols
President & CEO
American Bankers Association



Jonathan Mintz
President & CEO
Cities for Financial Empowerment Fund

cc: The Honorable Mike Crapo
Chairman
Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee

The Honorable Sherrod Brown
Ranking Member
Senate Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs Committee

The Honorable Maxine Waters
Chairwoman
House Financial Services Committee

The Honorable Patrick McHenry
Ranking Member
House Financial Services Committee

The Honorable Joyce Beatty
Chairwoman
House Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee

The Honorable Ann Wagner
Ranking Member
House Diversity & Inclusion Subcommittee

Members of the United States Senate

Members of the U.S. House of Representatives