



ANDREW GARBARINO

Representing the 2nd District of New York

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Contact:

[Kristen Cianci](#) – Rep. Garbarino

[Dylan Smith](#) – Rep. Suozzi

Garbarino, Suozzi Introduce Bill to Provide Relief Funding to Amusement Parks and Similar Small Businesses

The bill would expand eligibility for the Shutter Venue Operators Grant program as administered by the SBA

WASHINGTON – May 26, 2021 – Congressman Andrew Garbarino (R-NY) and Congressman Tom Suozzi (D-NY) introduced H.R. 3392 – The Family Fun Act – which would expand eligibility for the U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Shutter Venue Operators Grant (SVOG) program to include amusement parks and other community businesses. They were joined by Reps. Lee Zeldin (R-NY), Kathleen Rice (D-NY), Chris Jacobs (R-NY), and Ed Case (D-HI).

The bill was announced today by Reps. Garbarino and Suozzi during a press conference at Adventureland Amusement Park in Farmingdale, NY - a local family-owned business which would qualify for the SVOG program should this bill become law.

“The amusement park industry, a key driver of travel and tourism on Long Island, has been deeply impacted by the pandemic,” said Rep. Garbarino, a member of the House Committee on Small Business. “However, it is an industry that has been largely neglected by pandemic relief funding. Small businesses should not be denied vital funding due to a technicality. This bill will broaden the definition of eligible businesses and open the door to grant funding for amusement parks,

arcades, concession stands, bowling alleys, and other businesses that have been heavily impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic but have yet to receive relief.”

“Operators of rides at carnivals and amusement parks were crushed by COVID,” **said Rep. Suozzi.** *“Many of these folks were left out of the American Rescue Plan. It’s time to right that wrong and expand the Shuttered Venue Operator Grant to include operators at carnivals and amusement parks.”*

“We are thrilled to host Congressman Garbarino, Congressman Suozzi, and their constituents at our park, Adventureland,” **said Steven Gentile, second generation owner of the family run amusement park, Adventureland.** *We are grateful and hopeful that their tireless efforts to include our industry in the SVOG will be the lifeline businesses like ours so desperately need”.*

The Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) reports that due to COVID-19, industry wages fell by \$1.1 billion in Q2 of FY20 compared to Q2 of FY19. Peak employment fell by over 125,000 jobs this past summer as well. The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA) estimates the effects of the pandemic will have cost \$23 billion in economic losses in 2020 alone. This is roughly a 45% average loss in earned income, which is coincidentally the maximum grant amount stipulated for SVOG recipients.

The Family Fun Act will amend the Economic Aid to Hard-Hit Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Venues Act to include “attraction operators” as an eligible business to participate in the SVOG program, broadening the definition of SVOG eligible businesses allowing amusement parks and similar business to apply for funding from the over \$16 billion grant program administered by SBA.

Outside groups that support the legislation include:

- The Northeast Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (NEAAPA)
- The International Association of Amusement Parks and Attractions (IAAPA)

“SVOG was created to help the entertainment industries that were forced to remain closed during the pandemic, but some were left off the eligibility list,” **said David Oberlander, president of NEAAPA – The Northeast’s Entertainment**

Association that represents amusement parks and attractions throughout the Northeastern United States. *“The Family Fun Act, led by Rep. Garbarino and Rep. Suozzi, will correct that omission and allow the attractions industry to get back on its feet again, preserving jobs and providing safe entertainment for guests.”*

“IAAPA represents organizations and facilities in the attractions industry, many of which are small and medium-sized businesses. Our members, and our industry, have been devastated by the COVID-19 pandemic,” shared Hal McEvoy, President and CEO of IAAPA, the association for the attractions industry. “The extended government mandated closures coupled with operating limitations will have a long-lasting impact on these businesses for many months to come. Representatives Garbarino and Suozzi’s focused efforts for The Family Fun Act is exactly what attractions operators need as part of this recovery process. Attractions like Adventureland Amusement Park are an important part of the communities in which they are located. These businesses provide jobs and safe, family experiences for their guests. We commend Representatives Garbarino and Suozzi for their efforts to have attraction operators included in the Shuttered Venue Operator Grants Program.”

The Family Fun Act has been referred to the House Committee on Small Business for consideration.

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