March 26, 2020

The Honorable GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL’S NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE

Dear GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL’S NAME:

As a INSERT YOUR STATE NAME independent furniture and bedding retailer and family business, we’re focused on the health, safety and sustainability of our employees, families, customers, and community as the continued outbreak of COVID-19 develops. I sincerely appreciate the leadership, quick responses, and continually developing efforts your administration has shown as together, we work to minimize the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak on both public health and the broad economic implications in our state.

Our business, like many, are following the CDC’s Interim Guidance for Businesses and Employers and strive to do our part to help accomplish the goal of slowing the spread of COVID-19 in our community.

Today, perhaps more than at any time in the past, local families are counting on us during this time of crisis, and the we are committed to being there for our customers, our neighbors, and our community. The current and unprecedented pandemic demands that we all work together for the greater good, and our team stands ready to do our part. We believe that as a small, independent business, we are best equipped, best informed, and best able to determine our ability to remain open and serving our community with vital goods and services in this challenging time.

You, along with many leaders in our state, are undoubtedly very deliberately considering which businesses are “essential” and “non-essential” retail for purposes of social distancing, and while doing so, it is critically important not to overlook the important role that independent furniture retailers and servicers play in the safety of residents and their households during this time of crisis.

It’s crucial that we remain open and serving our community. It is our position that three primary factors completely validate essential status for our business. First, we serve those who work from home with home office furniture necessary for them to efficiently do their work in relative comfort. Secondly, access to mobility-enabling furniture, such as power lift chairs, is vital to those who are mobility challenged and disabled. Finally, access to motorized adjustable (hospital bed) style bed foundations make possible the feeding, bathing and enablement of necessary bodily functions for those who are bed-ridden or disabled.

Today’s industry data shows that a high percentage of purchases of the above items are made under duress for the replacement of products that have failed, or as the need for these products arise, often without expectation. Such failures and new needs occur daily, and as such, access to quality mobility enabling devices is vital. Additionally, the sudden surge in increased use by those sheltering in place will see a correlating spike in failures and the needed service or replacements that result.

The products we offer to our community serve critical roles necessary to maintain safe home environments for those sheltering in place. Among the critical roles played by these products are:

* As employees are being required to work from home, their access to office furniture and accessories is essential for the successful implementation of government mandated work from home provisions.
* As access to care facilities for the elderly continues to become strained, more of those with limited mobility will be required to remain at home. Access to lift chairs is essential for their care givers who, themselves, may not have the physical ability to help and/or who need to limit their close exposure to the immobile.
* As those who are ill and/or immobile find themselves bed ridden and must be cared for in the home, access to motorized and adjustable “hospital type” bed frames are essential to make feeding, bathing and other bodily functions easier for family and caregivers to provide.

We urge you to clarify this in your statements to the public, and to clearly designate independent furniture retailers and servicers as essential in our state.

Finally, it is important to note that our store(S) is/are equipped to allow for contact-less, curbside pick-up or curbside deliveries, maintaining social distancing and minimizing risk of further COVID-19 spread. Further, we have in place e-commerce solutions that allow consumers to select, purchase and request delivery or pickup of furniture and bedding products through our secure, transactional website. These capabilities reduce the need to strain in-place social distancing measures in physical store locations, which are in place to serve those with no access or familiarity with shopping for such goods online.

Thank you for your attention to this concern and your ongoing leadership. We stand ready to assist in any way as you consider how to best safeguard our communities.

Sincerely,

XXX XXXX

Title, COMPANY NAME

cc: Tom Hickman, Nationwide Marketing Group, Matthew R. Shay, National Retail Federation, Brian Dodge, Retail Industry Leaders Association