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MEDIA ADVISORY: Planning for a 2021 Recovery: At QuickBooks Town Hall Event, Senators Rubio and Cardin Lay out What's Next for Small Business Relief Efforts

Senators tell small businesses that restrictions may last as long as the end of 2021 and that long-term payroll relief may be necessary

MOUNTAIN VIEW, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- At a virtual QuickBooks Town Hall event this week, Senators Marco Rubio and Ben Cardin met with VP and Business Leader of QuickBooks Capital at Intuit, Luke Voiles, and QuickBooks' small business customers to discuss next steps for the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and future relief efforts for small businesses in the wake of COVID-19 and social distancing restrictions.

The senators, who serve together on the Senate Committee on Small Business and Entrepreneurship, took a bipartisan approach to answering questions from small business owners, and demonstrated a clear understanding of the needs of small businesses during this difficult time. The senators addressed:

- COVID-19 safety restrictions may impact business through the end of 2021
- a call for long-term payroll relief
- PPP loan availability
- PPP loan forgiveness

Below are some transcript excerpts from the event, which have been lightly edited for length and readability. The full event can be viewed at quickbooks.com/smallbusinesshelp.

On how long businesses may experience disruption:

Senator Rubio: "We need to assume that we're going to be facing restrictions until the end of 2021 because that may be how long it takes to develop a vaccine, clear it and make it broadly available. So we have to start thinking in those terms, not in terms of everything will be fine by November."

Is it too late to apply for a Paycheck Protection Program loan?

Senator Rubio: "There's still about over a hundred billion dollars left of a guaranteed capacity under the program. Some lenders have stopped accepting applications as they work through their backlog or others have been up and running the whole time. But the answer [to] the question is no, there's still time and the average loan [amount] continues to drop. So if you need it, you should apply."

About PPP loan forgiveness confusion and additional help:

Luke Voiles: “The next thing that's on our customers' minds is the forgiveness components. A lot of questions came in for this town hall on forgiveness. We are waiting for the SBA to give us more detailed guidance on exactly how that forgiveness process is going to work, but once they do, our goal is to set up an automated process within QuickBooks to allow customers to track and apply for forgiveness, whether they applied through us or through any bank. We want to help them with a form that allows them to go and apply for forgiveness.”

Senator Rubio: “I think that by and large, if you adhere to the 75% and payroll mechanism that way, which the vast majority of companies will be able to, I think you're in good shape. I think where the question really lies is in the exemption language because the exemption is in statute, but how you apply for it and how they're going to interpret it is a matter of debate. And, I should say it's a matter of uncertainty right now. In the first four weeks of this, the calls were about the eTRAN system not working, what forms do we use, why hasn't my money been disbursed yet. I think in the last 72 hours it's become almost exclusively about this issue of forgiveness.”

Luke Voiles: “I would think about it the same way you think about your accounting. We have an automated accounting platform and if you use QuickBooks, I would make sure your accounting entries are up to date. We are working on forms that can produce reports out of QuickBooks to help automate the process for requesting forgiveness. But, as the senators have both mentioned, we are also waiting for the guidance from the Treasury and the SBA to understand exactly what the details look like so we can make sure our customers get it right.”

On the need for more stimulus:

Senator Rubio: “This is a very unusual time up here, but I think we need to do it. And one of the biggest problems this program has had from the very beginning is not who got it, it's who didn't. And the reason why is because it became this sort of Hunger Games, free-for-all for limited funds. People figured out there's limited funds available, it's going to run out and it became a fight-for-survival type deal. The need was always greater than the capacity.”

Senator Cardin: “We didn't anticipate that we would still have the type of economic climate eight weeks later where small businesses can not operate at full capacity depending, of course, on what region of the country you may be located in. So we need to be flexible.”

On the need for longer-term payroll protection:

Senator Rubio: “I still think there's more need. I think part of coming up with that program, that third phase, is going to be a combination of identifying who needs it that still hasn't gotten it. And I think part of it may have to be if this is going to go longer than the eight weeks, is this now the time to address a more extended period of payroll support.”

On using fintech to deliver long-term payroll protection:

Senator Rubio: “The one thing I'm pretty confident of is that we've now built a stable of 5,400 lenders, including nonbank lenders and CDFIs and fintech and others. I think it makes sense

to just continue to build out that capacity, but also to use it as the route by which any future assistance is now delivered. I mean, ideally if people have already applied and received a PPP loan and you wanted to add to what they've already gotten another four weeks, you could just simply process it that way and there's an additional payment through the same mechanism.”

On underserved small business communities:

Senator Cardin: “I would hope that our target group on small business would be to make sure that those small businesses that are in underserved communities, those small businesses that are the really small, the small, small businesses [that] have had a dramatic reduction in revenues, can get the help that they need. When we first crafted a program, and it was the right way to do this, we wanted to get the money out quickly because we wanted to save small businesses. So this self-certification process was really streamlined so money could get out to businesses as quickly as possible. As we look to what comes next, I think we can be a little bit more selective and to make sure that we get the help to the small businesses that truly need the additional help.”

Luke Voiles: “Our base really is the underserved base. We have 6 million QuickBooks customers that use us for the accounting software. We have 1.4 million small businesses that use us for Payroll. And if you look at those payroll days, those businesses running payroll, 80% of them have less than 10 employees, 57% of them have less than five employees. On behalf of those 1.4 million small businesses, we actually pay one in 12 working Americans in the United States. We have a pretty large payroll business and we're really happy to try to help support these underserved populations.”

On what's next:

Senator Rubio: “Both Senator Cardin and I and multiple members are actively engaged and involved every day with the Administration to make sure that the rules and the guidance that are issued are reflective of our intent. We know we have a lot more to do here. This is unprecedented, truly. There are things to come that we haven't yet anticipated that no one nation on earth is built to respond to. It's going to take a lot of work, some trial and error, but know that the intent is there, that we fully understand the crisis facing small business in America and we hope to do the very best we can to do as much good as possible and the least amount of harm as possible. And, and that's our goal.”

About Senator Marco Rubio

Senator Marco Rubio (R) is the senior senator representing the state of Florida. First elected to the Senate in 2010, Senator Rubio is the Chairman of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Small Business Association. Senator Rubio is focused on sparking economic growth by capitalizing on innovation and the global economy.

About Senator Ben Cardin

Senator Ben Cardin (D) is the senior senator representing the state of Maryland. First elected to the Senate in 2006, Senator Cardin is the Ranking Member of the Small Business & Entrepreneurship Committee, which has jurisdiction over the Small Business Association.

Senator Cardin is focused on expanding access to contracts for women-owned, minority owned and veteran-owned businesses.

About the QuickBooks Town Hall Series

Intuit QuickBooks connects customers, small business owners, and self employed with lawmakers, business leaders and other experts. The first virtual town hall event was moderated by Sarah Paul, Intuit's Director of Global Policy and Regulatory Affairs and featured Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, Senator Ben Cardin of Maryland, Intuit's Luke Voiles, and live video questions from small business owners LaJuanna Russell and Allison DeVane, as well as questions submitted by other town-hall attendees. More than 10,000 people registered for the event and more than 4800 watched live.

About Intuit

Intuit's mission is to Power Prosperity Around the World. We are a global financial platform company with products including [TurboTax](#), [QuickBooks](#), [Mint](#) and [Turbo](#), designed to empower consumers, self-employed and small businesses to improve their financial lives. Our platform and products help customers get more money with the least amount of work, while giving them complete confidence in their actions and decisions. Our innovative ecosystem of financial management solutions serves approximately 50 million customers worldwide. Please visit us for the latest news and in-depth information [about Intuit](#) and its brands and find us on [social](#).

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Erin Green, Intuit QuickBooks

650-944-3774

Erin_Green@intuit.com

Jen Garcia, Access Communications

415-828-2514

jeng@accesstheagency.com

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