XXX MP

House of Commons

London

SW1A 0AA

DATE

Dear XXX,

**Urgent support needed for school travel sector**

As a business based in your constituency, I am writing to you to ask for your urgent assistance to save the school travel industry. As a travel provider, a significant proportion of our bookings are from school groups undertaking day or overnight educational visits. Overnight educational visits have been banned since 12 March 2020. Day visits have also faced considerable restrictions, with schools only being permitted to undertake these trips for three months during this period (September – December 2020).

I am asking for your help to bring our cause to the attention of policy makers and the public.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the school travel sector is facing a particularly challenging set of circumstances, it was amongst the first affected by the lockdown, owing to advice given to schools to cancel travel arrangements issued by the Department for Education on 12th March. As schools require significant time to organise and deliver educational trips, usually upwards of six months, the sector will also be amongst the last in the travel industry to return to normal.

School travel is a vital part of a coach operator’s business, it also makes a valuable contribution to learning outside the classroom which greatly enhances children’s resilience and mental wellbeing, as well as to the tourism economy of the UK.

The ban on school travel is indefinite and it is estimated that the sector will lose significant volumes of business over the next two academic years, as a minimum, and many will not return to previous levels of operation until the academic year 2021-22.

The evidence underpinning the benefits of school residential visits is very strong. Residential experiences can transform the learning environment of young people and raise their aspirations within school and beyond, into the wider community, further study, and the world of work. They also provide opportunities for schools to enhance vital study and life skills, and promote the alternative three ‘Rs’ of risk, resilience, and responsibility.

**Our ask to Government:**

While the reasons for the travel ban are understood, due to the long lead in and planning time for these experiences, on average 9 months, schools need the green light now to be able to start planning trips for 2022 and beyond. Without this permission, the school travel sector and associated businesses such as ours will be impacted well beyond the end of pandemic restrictions.

The Risk Protection Arrangement, the Government-backed insurance scheme for schools, needs to be expanded to include cover for Covid-related travel cancellations. This cover has been removed from all future bookings, providing a further barrier to organising future trips. The cover also needs to be made available to schools in Wales and Scotland.

We are not seeking financial support, even though comparable sectors such as film, leisure and sport have received direct financial assistance, we are simply asking for help with removing the barriers so the school travel sector can start operating again.

We would be delighted if you could bring this campaign to the attention to Government by:

* Writing to your colleagues in the Department for Education and DCMS
* Scheduling a written or oral question in Parliament
* Holding a Westminster Hall debate or Adjournment debate

I look forward to hearing from you and thank you in advance for your support in helping save the school travel sector and protecting jobs in your constituency. If you would like to learn more about our campaign, please do not hesitate to be in touch.

Yours sincerely,