



## Minnesota Independent Venue Alliance (MNIVA) Forms, Calls For State Relief With New Bill In State Legislature

*State Senate hearing scheduled for Wednesday, March 17, 2021*

**March 16, 2021 - Minneapolis, MN:** Dozens of independent venues and promoters across Minnesota joined forces in a statewide effort to #SaveMNStages. The newly formed [Minnesota Independent Venue Alliance \(MNIVA\)](#), the Minnesota chapter of the National Independent Venue Association (NIVA), leads the effort to secure state relief for local entertainment businesses shuttered due to the pandemic. Their mission is to preserve the state's beloved ecosystem of live music, performing arts, and entertainment.

MNIVA has spearheaded bi-partisan state legislation, in the form of the newly introduced bill [S.F. 1935](#) co-authored by Senator Karin Housley (R-District 39) and Senator Melisa Franzen (D-District 49), and [H.F. 2143](#) co-authored by Representative Paul Marquart (D-District 4B) and Representative Dave Baker (R-District 17B).

The proposed bill includes grants for Minnesota-owned venues and concert promotion companies that produce ticketed live entertainment events, as well as various licensing refunds, property and income tax relief, and temporary income tax and sales tax relief. The bill has bi-partisan support, demonstrating its importance in ensuring the vitality of Minnesota's arts and culture economy. S.F. 1935 is scheduled for a hearing on Wednesday, March 17 at 3:00 p.m. in the Senate Jobs & Economic Growth Finance and Policy Committee.

MNIVA urges all Minnesotans to visit [MNIVA.org](#) to take action and tell their local representatives to #SaveMNStages. In less than one minute, supporters can send a letter to legislators asking them to support the new state bill and encourage Governor Walz to include it in his supplemental state budget.

A federal bi-partisan Save Our Stages Act, now known as the Shuttered Venue Operators Grant (SVOG), was signed into law as part of the COVID-19 relief bill last December and will help cover a portion of losses due to closures in 2020. MNIVA celebrates the passage of this federal legislation and praises the SOS Act as an important blueprint for state aid. Independent venues and promoters remain optimistic, yet the Small Business Administration has not started accepting applications so none of the federal funds have been disbursed. There is no guarantee that all qualifying businesses in Minnesota will receive this federal aid; MNIVA asks Minnesota legislators for local relief now for those hardest hit by the pandemic.

“We need local legislators to rescue Minnesota businesses on the brink of closing through no fault of their own,” said Shayna Melgaard, MNIVA Chair and Talent Buyer for Sue McLean & Associates. “We are looking to the state to help us survive until a safe and financially viable re-opening is possible. Neighboring states are ensuring their arts and cultural hubs don’t close for good and have already implemented live entertainment grant programs. We are asking Minnesota to step up for Minnesota businesses.”

[Wisconsin awarded \\$15M](#) in COVID-19 Live Music and Entertainment Venue Grants to 96 venues before the end of 2020. [Montana directed \\$10M](#) in relief funds to a Live Entertainment Grant program last August. In January, [Michigan announced a \\$3.5M](#) Michigan Stages Survival Program that provides grants to entertainment and live music venues. Other states are considering tax credits, reimbursements, and abatements to help these businesses survive the continued shutdown.

Local venues and promoters are critical to their economies and tax bases as employers, tourism destinations, and revenue generators for neighboring businesses. Independent venues exist in nearly every Minnesota community. These businesses, shuttered for the past year, were the first to close and will be the last to reopen. Even with reopening at limited capacity on the horizon, getting back to pre-pandemic business levels will be a challenge.

#### About MNIVA:

The Minnesota Independent Venue Alliance (MNIVA) is a 501c6 nonprofit organization with a mission to preserve and nurture the ecosystem of independent venues and promoters throughout the state of Minnesota. Launched in 2020 in the early days of the COVID-19 shutdown, independent music venues and promoters in Minnesota banded together to form MNIVA in affiliation with the National Independent Venue Association ([NIVA](#)), to advocate for independent venues and promoters shuttered as a result of the pandemic.

[www.mniva.org](http://www.mniva.org)

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