April 6, 2020

Gretchen Whitmer, Governor
State of Michigan
111 S. Capitol Avenue
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer,

I am writing to respectfully request that you reconsider your proposal to extend your emergency authorities by 70 days. After speaking with leaders of our business community, I am convinced there is no executive band-aid that could save our economy from the decimation that would accompany an additional two-plus months of closures. For that reason, I urge you to let legislators travel to Lansing and extend your executive authority on a more frequent and pro-active basis.

The number of confirmed cases of COVID-19 continues to rise in Michigan. In the coming days it will again be necessary to extend your authority to take quick, executive actions. That said, the economic ramifications of an additional 70 under an emergency declaration would be a death sentence for countless businesses in our community. It is stated in Executive Order 2020-33 “The economic damage -already severe- will compound with time.” Later in the order, it states Michigan could have a 10% unemployment rate and economic sectors with substantial social interaction could contract by 50%. As elected officials, it is our job to mitigate these damages as much as possible.

Therefore, on behalf of the people of my district, I will not approve of a 70-day extension of our state of emergency. Based on an incredible amount of feedback from hundreds of business owners and employees in Southwest Michigan, I am providing you with an alternative option that continues to uphold the current public health measures in place, while giving our small businesses a fighting chance to survive this crisis. Rather than ending careers and closing businesses by announcing mandated closures until mid-June, we should extend the state of emergency in smaller increments of time. We were not elected to serve our communities and state to merely make easy decisions during simpler times. In short, it is time for us to earn our paychecks and do what we were elected to do. My hope is that this letter makes it abundantly clear that I will support decision making that continues to ensure the safety of all Michiganders during this pandemic, while strongly
urging you to reconsider the 70 day State of Emergency extension that would be a death warrant for countless Southwest Michigan businesses of all sizes.

Additionally, we request greater accountability and transparency regarding Michigan’s unemployment office and the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” Executive Order. Members and staff have struggled to reach unemployment for weeks, making it difficult to adequately assist the thousands of Michiganders who have temporarily lost their jobs as a result of this crisis. This issue of lagging response times needs to be addressed as soon as possible in order to ensure our community’s general welfare. Finally, the question of which jobs have been deemed essential vs. non-essential needs greater clarification. The vagueness of Michigan’s stay at home order has created questions for countless, contractors, construction workers, landscapers, etc. across our state. As warmer weather approaches, the need to clarify which businesses may continue to operate is vital information for businesses and employees alike.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to reaching an agreement that helps to flatten the curve. As we navigate the uncharted waters of how to handle this pandemic, we need to carefully assess the effect it has on all Michigan businesses. Michigan businesses are the life blood of our state, and I will continue to fight for them. Extending the state of emergency in shorter increments of time will allow us to stay flexible and responsive to the serious challenges we have before us.

Sincerely,

Beth Griffin
State Representative
66th District

John Reilly
State Representative
46th District

Michele Hoitenga
State Representative
102nd District

Beau LaFave
State Representative
108th District
Brad Paquette  
State Representative  
78th District

Luke Meerman  
State Representative  
88th District

Daire Rendon  
State Representative  
103rd District

Steven Johnson  
State Representative  
72nd District

Aaron Miller  
State Representative  
59th District