April 20, 2020

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer  
Office of the Governor  
The State Capitol  
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Dear Gov. Whitmer:

As a member of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human Services, I applaud your announced intentions, while continuing to protect as many Michiganders as possible from COVID-19, to also protect as many Michiganders as possible from permanently losing their jobs, businesses, and homes.

I share your belief that restrictions on businesses and other human activity that can be conducted safely and with common sense should be lifted, starting May 1st.

I’ve walked enough breadwinners in Bay and Midland counties through the unemployment filing process over the phone that I know the fear of permanent economic damage to families we both represent is just as real as their concerns about public health and safety.

As we work together toward safely allowing people in Bay and Midland counties and across Michigan to go back to work, please consider what I believe to three reasonable, rational, and common sense steps forward toward that objective:


These newest recommended CISA standards, based on scientific data, recognize the following as essential services: construction and construction-related supply chains, additional energy sectors, Realtors, certain seasonal lawn care services, forest products, garden materials, and health services like optometry and chiropractic care. Adopting these new data-defined standards will allow Michiganders in all those job categories to resume doing business while obviously practicing the well-established safety standards recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (social distancing, masks, and frequent hand-washing).
Simply by adopting CISA 3.0 standards -- as almost all states already have, including those on our borders -- tens of thousands of Michiganders could go back to work without negatively impacting public health. Michigan should no longer be an outlier in this regard, forcing families we both represent to suffer significant economic and mental health concerns unnecessarily.

2. “SAFE VS. UNSAFE” vs. “ESSENTIAL VS. NON-ESSENTIAL” -- Adopting recommendation #1 is just the first step toward transitioning Michigan from trying to subjectively define what jobs and human activity are “essential vs. non-essential” to the more objective standard of what scientific data indicates is “safe vs. unsafe.”

Many of the jobs and activities banned by your most recent order can be done safely and productively just by following strict social distancing guidelines and workplace safety best practices. There’s no compelling reason for Michigan to continue to ignore new scientific best practices and continue to ban people from safely performing jobs they need to support themselves and their families. Michigan should be focused on saving as many lives and jobs and small businesses as possible.

3. REGIONAL VS. ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL -- Recognize the scientific and medical data that supports transitioning Michigan’s coronavirus response to a more regional rather than one-size-fits-all lockdown that is not supported by science.

As additional Personal Protection Equipment, testing, and health data is gathered from different regions of our state, let’s work together to craft appropriate regional guidelines based on each region’s medical preparedness, per capita positive case ratios, tests administered, immunity rates (antibody tests) and track and trace methodologies. This scientific and medically based information should guide our actions, region by region.

To avoid unnecessary new bureaucracy, I recommend we use the eight-region trauma system already used by the Department of Health and Human Services in the delivery of its services. This will allow us to match risk conditions with the appropriate return-to-work guidelines for each region.

Thank you in advance, Governor, for your willingness to modify our response to this significant public health challenge based on new scientific information that will allow us to protect people’s lives and their livelihoods, rather than cause unnecessary hardship, stress, and trauma by trying to choose one or the other.

Please let me know if there is any particular way my office or I can be of assistance.

Respectfully,

[Signature]

Rep. Annette Glenn
House District 98