



107TH DISTRICT
STATE CAPITOL
P.O. BOX 30014
LANSING, MI 48909-7514

MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

LEE CHATFIELD
SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE

PHONE: (517) 373-2629
FAX: (517) 373-8429
LeeChatfield@house.mi.gov
www.RepChatfield.com

March 20, 2020

Governor Gretchen Whitmer
State of Michigan
PO Box 30013
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Governor Whitmer:

I would like to thank you for working with the Legislature to collaboratively address the emergency policy changes that are necessary during this time. We are all feeling the impact of the coronavirus, and stopping the impact of its spread will take extraordinary efforts on all our parts.

We all especially appreciate your willingness to accept our ideas on revisions to existing executive orders and for new executive actions. Already, we have worked together to keep thousands of small businesses open by clarifying EO 2020-9, ease requirements on others in EO 2020-9, secure our constitutional rights in EO 2020-11, and help schools and parents stay healthy by socially distancing in EO 2020-15. These changes alone could save thousands of jobs in the coming weeks, prevent hundreds of people from joining together in small rooms for unnecessary meetings and protect our way of life, all while still encouraging collective action to stop the virus.

In addition to those revisions, many of the people who have reached out to me and my colleagues with concerns and requests for help could use targeted changes to state policies. We listened to the people we represent and found responsible reforms that can help the millions of people who are negatively impacted by the fallout of this illness. I know we all want to give them the ability to make it through this crisis, get back to work and get back to normal.

That is why House Republicans have put together a list of reforms designed to improve public health and provide short-term assistance to Michigan families struggling with the societal and economic impacts of the coronavirus. We would like to ask you to spend some time looking over these suggestions and consider their inclusion in your future response efforts.

Many of these reforms would normally be pursued through legislative action and the passage of bills, but the immediate need of a response and constitutional limits on the speed of the Legislature have led us to offer these ideas to you and request their implementation through executive action.

The challenges we are facing today are unprecedented, and our response must be as well. People need real help, and they need it now. We are happy to work with you to make important and immediate changes to state programs and provide the real solutions people expect.

Our reform ideas broadly fall into the categories of public health, education, childcare, small business support, and family economic support. You can find them below. The Michigan House of Representatives is ready to help implement these executive changes moving forward to ensure that our state and residents are protected both today and into the future.

PUBLIC HEALTH:

- Accelerating Licensure in the Public Health Code: Suspend licensure and regulatory requirements for current medical professions in need (e.g. continuing education, license renewal, facility requirements etc.) and/or expediting or waiving the licensure of future medical individuals who could assist health care demands during the emergency.
- Empowering Scopes of Practice in Healthcare: Alter, remove or expand temporary scopes of practice within the licensed medical field to immediately assist with the state's health emergency.
- Increase Primary Physicians in Michigan: Extend a previously sunset provision in the public health code to allow Canadian-licensed physicians to practice in Michigan.

EDUCATION

- Expand Cyber Charter School Enrollment: With students potentially missing in-person instruction at a brick and mortar school, expanding enrollment in cyber charter schools and providing supplemental funding for those who enroll during the crisis could assist students with progressing to the next grade on time.
- Instructional Time for Online or Distance Learning Opportunities: If school is cancelled for an extended period, districts should be allowed provide on-line instruction to all students to earn instructional hours towards the required days and hours of instructional time.
- Online Teaching/Learning Professional Development: If online or distance learning instruction should count towards the day and hours requirement, provide teachers and/or parents with development courses on how to teach students online or through

distance learning practices. Michigan Virtual University should be able to scale up access to online professional development for teachers or parents.

- Online Course Content: If needed, contract with an online course provider to provide universal access to grade level appropriate content for all students during the emergency.

CHILDCARE

- Temporarily Increase Child Care Ratios: Family and group childcare homes are limited in the number of children that they can care for. Allowing a variance to these ratios for school-age children could provide additional capacity, especially in rural areas where large childcare centers are not available.
- Extending Operational Hours: Extend current licensed large day care centers' hours of operations.
- Temporarily Increase Child Care Subsidies: Temporarily increase the current federal poverty limit (FPL) limitation for families who fall under the 130 percent FPL eligibility standard for childcare subsidies.

SMALL BUSINESS SUPPORT

- Delay Tax Remittance Dates: Extend waivers for all penalties and interest for late payment of sales and use tax for longer periods of time (60-90 days). Also include other merchant and or payroll tax delays such as CIT, motor fuel tax, UI, casino taxes, income tax and/or any other state-imposed taxes to provide help to businesses that are filing quarterly payroll related collections in April.
- Unemployment Protections: Expand Unemployment Insurance rate hike protections to all employers during the time of the emergency.
- Business Retention: As state and federal resources are administered for employer assistance loans and grants, focus job incentive programs such as the CRP and others on job retention during this emergency and not job attraction. In addition, deploy small business navigators to help local community-based businesses navigate the application process for such programs and resources.
- Expand Takeout: Allow retail establishments to sell alcohol for take-out and/or pick up.

- Permit Pay at the Pump After-Hours: Allow gas sales at pumps after hours without statutory regulations that require a staff member to be present.
- Truck Weight Exemptions: The current truck weight executive order should include energy haulers, such as propane, to ensure that all Michigan residents can meet their energy needs.

FAMILY ECONOMIC SUPPORT

- Unemployment Supplemental Incentive: Ensure anyone placed on unemployment during this time of emergency is permitted to gain additional part time employment and keep their UI benefits.
- Unemployment Benefit Extension: Extend unemployment benefits through the duration of the declared emergency.
- Unemployment for Individual Contractors: Allow independent contractors directly affected by an executive order to qualify for unemployment benefits during the state of emergency.
- Suspension of 401K Contributions: Allow employees with a state-sponsored 401K plan to immediately suspend their membership in their 401K plan without penalty.
- Income Tax: Delay the Michigan income tax filing deadline and ensure any federal income tax payment to taxpayers is not subject to the Michigan income tax.
- Suspend Outdoor Activity Permits & Fees: Encourage other outdoor activities such as fishing and hunting by extending free fishing and hunting periods.
- Delay Foreclosures: Further pause property tax foreclosures beyond the EO recommendations until a later date.
- Regulatory Fee Waivers: Temporarily forgive any and all state permits fees, licenses, and/or professional licensure fees that are directly impacted by the executive actions.

The items on this list would do much to help Michigan families struggling at this time. We would love to see them considered and potentially included in your future measures to mitigate this situation. Together, we can keep people safe, lessen the negative impact of this crisis on families who are living paycheck to paycheck, and fix some of the unintended consequences of government action.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lee Chatfield". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Speaker Lee Chatfield
Speaker of the Michigan House of Representatives