



DELAWARE GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF DELAWARE
411 LEGISLATIVE AVENUE
DOVER, DELAWARE 19901

May 19, 2020

Governor John Carney
Carvel State Office Building
820 N. French Street, 12th Floor
Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear Governor Carney:

We write today with extreme concern over the impact of the decisions that have been made so far by your administration in an attempt to combat the coronavirus. We have watched as your administration favored large and powerful business interests over our local merchants. We have seen businesses shut down and their owners threatened with criminal charges. And we have listened as mixed messages and confusion have caused panic and fear to spread far and wide.

We have fought tirelessly behind the scenes to impact the decisions you have made, largely because we believed that we needed to all be on the same team in combatting this virus. Unfortunately, our concerns have not been heeded and our suggestions have been adopted too late, if at all.

It is time to say, "Enough is enough."

Your Phase One "re-opening" of the Delaware economy is too little, and too late. Delawareans and the businesses they love have given so much during this time, in order to flatten the curve and to give our medical system time to prepare for the long haul. We have met that goal, and hospitalizations are declining. Meanwhile, we have decisions over the future of thousands of Delaware small businesses being made by a group of people who have little to no experience running a business, and to no one's surprise, the results have been disastrous. The state needs to adopt a new decision framework – one that prioritizes opening those businesses that can be opened.

Our small businesses know how to operate safely. They know that the ultimate judge of their success will be public confidence. They just want a fair playing field in order to compete. It's time to

give them the chance to do so. It's time to trust Delawareans to know what is best, and to act accordingly.

Specifically:

Move the start date for Phase One to Friday, May 22. Memorial Day weekend is one of the largest weekends of the year for many businesses, especially those at the beach. To cut that flow of business off in favor of an arbitrary June 1 date, despite evidence that the virus is receding in Delaware is a major mistake that will have devastating consequences for Sussex County, especially.

Remove the restriction on short-term lodging, and the blockage of visitors from other areas. Hotels, motels, campgrounds and rental housing add to the ability of people to properly distance themselves. With delivery and innovation, we can boost our economy and keep people safe. People want to spend money here. Nearby locations like Ocean City are safely doing so. We need to do the same.

Open the churches. Church leaders need to have the leeway to make decisions for their congregations. They know the heavy weight of the risks, and they will do the right thing.

Allow daycares, youth sports and children's activities to return to normal. No one can go to work if they have young children at home. Children have been proven to be less susceptible to the virus, and there are questions about their likelihood to be spreaders, as well. Give people the choice in whether or not to send their kids to daycare or camp. Outdoor play is good for the body and mind, and there is strong evidence that outdoor transmission of the virus is very rare.

Audit hospitalizations and deaths. There are many doubts and concerns that have been raised anecdotally about the quality of the data that is being reported. While we do not question the intent of the hospitals, DPH and DHSS, there is a great deal of chatter in the medical community about deaths being classified as COVID-19 that perhaps should not be. If there is a discrepancy in the data, it is in everyone's interest to find out.

In the end, we all want what is best for the people of Delaware. But the time has come to express our opinion on how to reach the best outcome. We urge you in the strongest possible terms to give people and business owners back their freedom and let them assume responsibility for themselves and their communities. This virus will be with us for some time. It is up to all of us to adjust to its existence. We believe in the people of the state of Delaware. We hope you will join us.

Sincerely,

Sen. Gerald Hocker (Senate Minority Leader)
Rep. Danny Short (House Minority Leader)
Rep. Tim Dukes (House Minority Whip)

Sen. Dave Lawson
Sen. Brian Pettyjohn
Sen. Bryant Richardson
Sen. Dave Wilson
Rep. Rich Collins
Rep. Ron Gray
Rep. Ruth Briggs King
Rep. Shannon Morris
Rep. Charles Postles
Rep. Jeff Spiegelman
Rep. Jesse Vanderwende
Rep. Lyndon Yearick