



State of Connecticut
HOUSE REPUBLICAN OFFICE
STATE CAPITOL
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

March 31, 2020

Office of Governor Ned Lamont
State Capitol
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Dear Governor Lamont,

First, on behalf of the House Republican Caucus, I would like to commend you, your staff, and your entire administration for your efforts in dealing with such an extraordinary crisis.

In any situation like this, we are constantly trying to identify problems so that we know how to respond to our residents. As state legislators, we are often the first point of contact for families and businesses. That puts us in a unique position to be able to identify problems and offer solutions.

Like you, House Republican members have received phone calls, emails, and texts from constituents since the crisis first hit our state. During these times, almost all constituent communications convey problems that they are encountering related to the crisis we are facing. I know that through your emergency authority, you have been issuing daily executive orders that deal with many of these problems. Thank you for your action.

Our members and staff have been working hard to process all communications and to identify unmet needs and unintended consequences of executive orders. In a spirit of cooperation, the House Republican Caucus respectfully requests your consideration of additional action to address those unmet needs and unintended consequences.

To that end, I have attached a document that conveys some of the problems our members have been hearing from constituents, as well as corresponding proposals to help solve those problems. Inevitably, this pandemic will generate additional issues, and we will continue to process those and communicate them to your office.

On behalf of our constituents, we are grateful for your consideration. And, again, thank you for your efforts. If there is any way that my caucus and I can be assistance to you, please do not hesitate to reach out to me.

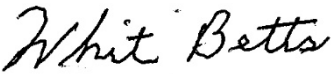
Sincerely,



Representative Tim Ackert



Representative Harry Arora



Representative Whit Betts




Representative Mitch Bolinsky



Representative Bill Buckbee



Representative Vincent Candelora



Representative Devin Carney



Representative Christie Carpino



Representative Jay Case



Representative Holly Cheeseman




Representative Stephanie Cummings



Representative Tony D'Amelio



Representative Chris Davis



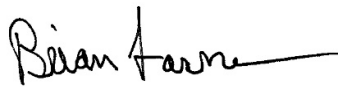
Representative Tom Delnicki



Representative Laura Devlin



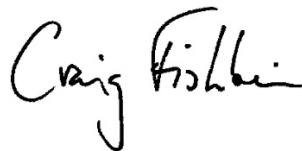
Representative Doug Dubitsky



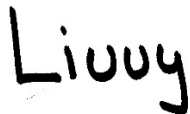
Representative Brian Farnen



Representative Charles Ferarro



Representative Craig Fishbein



Representative Livvy Floren



Representative Mike France



Representative John Frey



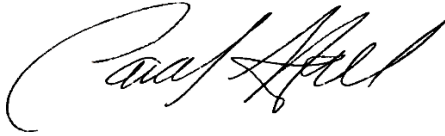
Representative John Fusco



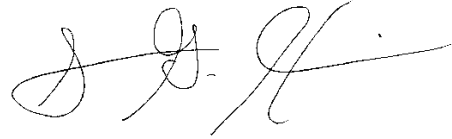
Representative Robin Green



Representative Irene Haines



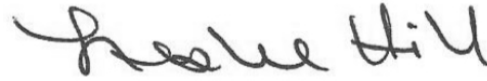
Representative Carol Hall



Representative Steve Harding



Representative Rick Hayes



Representative Leslee Hill



Representative Kathy Kennedy



Representative Themis Klarides



Representative Nicole Klarides-Ditria



Representative Noreen Kokoruda



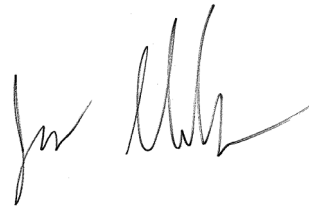
Representative David Labriola



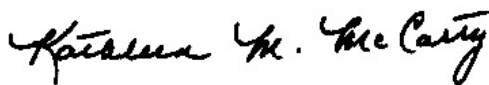
Representative Brian Lanoue



Representative Gail Lavielle




Representative Jesse MacLachlan



Representative Kathleen McCarty



Representative Ben McGorty



Representative Tom O'Dea



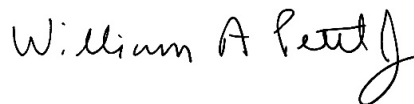
Representative Arthur O'Neill



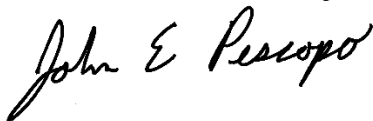
Representative Cara Pavalock-D'Amato



Representative Jason Perillo



Representative William Pettit



Representative John Piscopo



Representative Joe Polletta



Representative Rosa Rebimbas



Representative Dave Rutigliano



Representative Bill Simanski




Representative Rich Smith





Representative J.P. Sredzinski




Representative Kurt Vail


Representative David Wilson


Representative Terrie Wood


Representative David Yaccarino


Representative Tami Zawistowski


Representative Joe Zullo


Representative Lezlye Zupkus

House Republican Coronavirus Response

Unemployment Experience Rating

Through no fault of their own, many businesses were forced to shut down and layoff employees. They should not be punished further by requiring them to pay higher unemployment taxes.

Each company's experience rating should be capped at the rate that was in place on March 1, 2020.

Business Interruption Compensation

With very few exceptions, businesses cannot use business interruption insurance policies to cover the loss of business income related to the Coronavirus crisis and emergency orders. Ultimately, layoffs or staffing reductions are inevitable; employers and their employees share the pain of businesses having to close their doors.

The state shall create a business interruption fund to compensate small and medium-sized companies (as well as non-profits) that were shut down or were significantly impacted by a reduction in business. This program is not insurance and does not change existing insurance policies. It is a state-funded business assistance program that would rely on insurance companies to process applications for grants or loans.

Property Tax Payments

Many businesses and families will find a way to get by; they just need a little time.

The penalty for late payments of business and residential property taxes on real estate, motor vehicle, and personal property should be reduced from 18% to 2%, for payments made up to 90 days after the deadline. This change will apply to payments otherwise due on or before August 31, 2020.

Town Hall Hours of Operation

Towns need to find a balance between practicing social distancing and continuing to provide services for their residents.

Town halls should be accessible to residents by appointment to perform required services, and town officials must inform residents regarding accessibility options.

Trade and Professional Licenses

From now until June 30th, all fees and renewals for trade and professional licenses should be delayed by 90 days.

Plastic Bags

Public health experts are discouraging the use of reusable bags during our fight against the spread of the Coronavirus because they can carry and spread the virus and foodborne illness.

We should suspend local ordinances that ban the use of plastic bags.

Efficient Use of State Workforce

Some state employees continue to go to the office or job site to work; others are telecommuting, and some are forced to be at home with reduced responsibilities or no work responsibilities at all. It's not their fault. Meanwhile, some agencies are struggling to keep up with workloads.

The administration should actively try to identify underutilized employees and temporarily reassign them to positions that are in high demand, such as the processing of unemployment claims.

Nursing School Graduates

If hospitals are not crowded yet, they will be soon as the peak of the Coronavirus is expected to hit within the next few weeks. Hospitals will need all the help they can get.

Throughout Connecticut, hundreds of nurses will be graduating soon, and they will be unselfishly eager to do their part during this emergency. The state should do everything in its power to responsibly expedite the testing and licensing processes to place graduating nurses into the healthcare workforce.

Student Loans

Whether they are business owners, employees, or independent contractors, so many college graduates are struggling with the additional burden of paying off a college loan while trying to get by during this time of crisis.

The Governor should contact the federal government to urge refinancing of student loans at the same interest rate that banks are able to borrow money. Lower rates should apply to all higher education – universities, trade schools and certificate programs.

First Responders and Healthcare Workers

Our first responders and healthcare workers are on the front lines of our battle against the spread of Coronavirus. Many have already contracted the virus and it is inevitable that more will follow, and they will need to have an appropriate amount of time for recovery without going through loads of red tape.

For purposes of compensation, we should establish a presumption that any first responder or healthcare worker who contracts COVID-19 did so while on the job. They should not have to go through a long, drawn-out process to prove that they contracted the virus on the job.