

Zach Hauge

From: Janice McGeachin
Sent: Friday, April 17, 2020 12:13 PM
To: Brad Little
Subject: Regarding Idaho's Covid-19 Response, I Respectfully Request your Consideration of the Following

State



of Idaho

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Janice

McGeachin

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Brad Little
Governor
Statehouse
Boise, Idaho 83720

Dear Governor Little,

Idahoans are suffering right now and they are experiencing a great deal of fear and uncertainty about the future. Our state needs clear and confident leadership providing honest and open communication about how to proceed with our lives and businesses.

I respectfully request your consideration of the following:

Provide greater clarification to the people of Idaho when to prepare to reopen the economy. Wednesday's press release, which was issued prior to the amended isolation order states: "Governor Little also said 'non-essential' businesses should prepare to reopen after April 30 as long as they prepare operational plans over the next two weeks to maintain social distancing for staff and patrons; provide adequate sanitation and protective coverings for employees, vendors, and patrons; offer curbside and pickup delivery; limit number of people in business at a time; and direct flow of people in the operation. This excludes some 'non-essential' businesses where people simply cannot safely social distance, such as nightclubs, bars, and restaurants for dine-in; indoor gyms and recreational facilities; hair and nail salons; convention and entertainment centers; and public events and gatherings."

This is not stated in the isolation order. In fact, the order specifically states that it will 'continue to be in effect until 11:59 p.m. on April 30, 2020 or *until it is extended, rescinded, superseded, or amended* in writing by the Director. Section 8.g.iii adds to the definition of 'Minimum Basic Operations' but this is no different from what many businesses are already doing without being directed by the government.

Idahoans have been plagued with uncertainty and ambiguity for too long. It is time to stop with conjecture and start making some decisions. Please provide more certainty in these uncertain times.

Eliminate the one size fits all definition of 'essential businesses' in Section 8(f). According to its own report, The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) has issued a set of *guidelines*, which states as its purpose 'This list is intended to help State, local, tribal and territorial officials as they work to protect

their communities, *while ensuring continuity of functions critical to public health and safety, as well as economic and national security*. Decisions informed by this list should also take into consideration additional public health considerations based on the specific COVID-19-related concerns of particular jurisdictions. **This list is advisory in nature. It is not, nor should it be considered, a federal directive or standard. Additionally, this advisory list is not intended to be the exclusive list of critical infrastructure sectors, workers, and functions that should continue during the COVID-19 response across all jurisdictions. Individual jurisdictions should add or subtract essential workforce categories based on their own requirements and discretion?** <https://www.cisa.gov/publication/guidance-essential-critical-infrastructure-workforce>

As I studied this list I found it interesting that it included *clergy for essential functions and elections personnel to include both public and private sector elections support*. In fact, the list is quite expansive and leaves room for many other critical sectors. Why not simply reference this as a guideline for our community? How have we extrapolated this language to be used as a yardstick to determine which businesses should be shut down and which employees are non-essential? Please end the *divisive* language which defines some businesses, and by definition their employees, as either essential or non-essential.

A dark narrative is emerging on social media that if you are a non-essential worker than you are not important. All employees are essential. Employees who have thought that they are not at risk, including teachers and state and local employees are all at risk of losing their job if our economy were to collapse. The use of this language only seeks to divide us and not unite us. It was not the intent of the federal government to decide what jobs or industries should be shut down. Why is it the intent of the state government to do so? We must respect the rights of individuals acting within the market to balance health and safety with their other needs. That's how we determine what is truly essential.

Provide unprecedented tax relief to the citizens of Idaho.

Specifically, I ask that you use the emergency powers provided in IC 46-601 for the delay of the second half of local property taxes that are due June 20, the delay of any corporate or individual income tax due June 15, the delay of business unemployment tax due April 30, a sales tax holiday for the duration of the isolation order, or any combination of the above. If we don't turn this economy around this will be our reality. We might as well get it over with sooner rather than later.

The federal government has provided certain tax credits to cash strapped individuals and businesses. Many have not yet received their Trump stimulus check. The funding for the Paycheck Protection Program and other financing tools has evaporated.

We cannot rely solely on unemployment. We are already nearing 100,000 unemployed Idahoans, with more joining the rolls every day. Our trust fund is only solvent to cover approximately 162,000 Idahoans for 12 weeks. Each day this progresses, we move dangerously closer to the precipice. How many Idahoans have to lose their jobs before this becomes a crisis of sufficient magnitude which will eclipse the virus?

I agree that we need to do all that we can to protect our frontline workers, the elderly, and the vulnerable population from the Covid-19 virus and to protect our economy. These two goals do not need to be mutually exclusive.

As I have stated to you previously, we need to reopen our economy. Using the example of our small family business, we provided \$172,319.07 in various payroll, income, property, and sales tax in 2019. According to the Small Business Administration, there are 154,410 other such small businesses (less than 100 employees) in Idaho. https://www.sba.gov/sites/default/files/advocacy/Idaho_1.pdf.

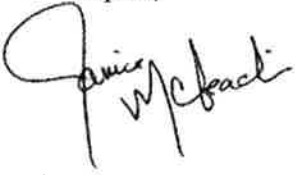
All businesses are essential because they provide the backbone for our economy. Based on this one example, the loss of these businesses could represent a staggering \$26.7b loss to federal, state, and local governments. We will lose the ability to fund our public school system and all levels of government if we lose our ability to operate our businesses. As business owners, we know that this is not an option.

I cannot and will not support an extension of an isolation order or the continued shutdown of business past April 30, 2020. This will, no doubt, be catastrophic to our economy. I will do all that I can to help ensure that Idaho's businesses

reopen after this date. All of them. I also fear the potential of a constitutional showdown between some of the people of Idaho and your Administration.

This is the time for bold leadership. Please provide greater clarification regarding a return to normalcy, eliminate the divisive terminology of "non-essential" businesses and employees, and provide significant and much-needed tax relief to Idahoans. Without boldness and clarity, things will continue to get worse in our state. Please act now to prevent that from happening.

With respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janice McGeachin". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large initial "J".

Janice McGeachin
Lieutenant Governor

CC: Senate/House Republican Caucus
Zach Hauge