

California State Senate

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April 21, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
California State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of the California Senate Republican Caucus, I would like to thank you for your work directing the state's response to the COVID-19 outbreak. As we have learned over the course of these last few weeks, we must remain diligent in our efforts to mitigate its impact to our citizens and economy.

I write to you now, however, because it is time for us to move away from pursuing a set of uniform, statewide policies in response to this crisis and to instead permit for more focused and narrowly tailored solutions that are based on local conditions and levels of threat. In particular, we should strongly consider granting city and county governments more flexibility and discretion with respect to the shelter-in-place and business closure requirements contained within your executive order EO-N-33-2020, issued on March 19, 2020.

From what we have seen so far, it appears that COVID-19 has had a sizably different rate of spread throughout the communities and regions within California. Many cities and counties have in fact only had a handful of cases. For these and other similarly affected communities, it does not make sense to indefinitely bind them to the statewide shelter-in-place and business closure orders, especially when the social and economic harms that naturally follow from these orders are in themselves also quite serious. Instead, we should exempt these communities from a strict application of your order and allow their local leaders to work in conjunction with state officials to find a more appropriate and workable set of safety measures to apply, ones that accurately balance the size of the risk against the costs and benefits of a continued shutdown to the local community.

This approach would be in line with President Trump's Guidelines for Opening Up America Again, and it would also help restart many of our small communities who are facing the threat of recession and even bankruptcy. There are many workers and small business owners who will forever lose their livelihoods if they remain unable to work, which is why I must urge you to loosen the statewide application of your order and allow those communities who can safely begin to reopen to do so immediately.

Relaxing these requirements would also give us more precise data about the efficacy of these modified safety measures as they are unfolded and tested in real-time. This would then allow us to modify future proposed measures and timelines for reopening California, in a way that is much more in line with freshly observed local data.

In conclusion, I hope that you will seriously consider modifying your order to allow those local jurisdictions within California that have remained relatively unscathed by the virus to begin to reopen. It would go a long way towards restarting our state and local economies, and it would help provide a tangible sense of relief to many of our communities and businesses who have experienced considerable suffering because of the uncertainty surrounding the virus and their livelihoods.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Shannon Grove", enclosed in a light gray rectangular border.

Shannon Grove
Senate Republican Leader