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House Action Needed This Week

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Email Addresses are omitted as some recipients were not government employees.

I understand that many representatives agree that enough is enough, and this state of emergency must end on April 30, 2020. However, I also understand that some legislators are concerned about the continuation of a few key provisions of the executive orders. These issues were also discussed briefly by Governor Whitmer in her press conference on April 20, 2020, and include unemployment compensation, liability protection for front line workers, and federal funding. In addition to these issues, consideration must also be given to the EO provisions for redeeming property for nonpayment of delinquent property taxes, the extension of state income taxes, the elections to be held May 5th, and the restoration of water services during the COVID19 pandemic. This can be done quite simply and does not need to be made complicated.

While I would urge the immediate consideration of HB 5711, HB 5713, HB 5706 and HB 5707, the aforementioned issues could all be addressed in HB 5712 or another bill by simply adopting portions of the EOs as follows:

1. Paragraphs 1-7 of EO 2020-24 would address the unemployment compensation issues
2. Paragraphs 1-3 of EO 2020-14 would address delinquent property tax redemption
3. Paragraphs 1-11 of EO 2020-26 would address income tax extensions
4. Paragraphs 5, 8 and 9 of EO 2020-27 would address the May 5th elections
5. Paragraphs 1-5 of EO 2020-28 would address the need for water services to be restored during COVID19

To the extent that concern has been expressed over liability protections extended to front line workers in EO 2020-30, it must be noted that the "protections" therein merely restated the protections already given to front line workers in MCL 30.411 and MCL 691.1407. Thus, no EO language needs to be adopted for this purpose. To the extent that concern was expressed over the continuation of federal funding once Whitmer's state of emergency has ended, we must remember that MCL 30.416 specifically allows the governor to "apply for, accept, and disburse grants from the federal government," as President Trump declared a nationwide state of emergency on March 13th, backdated to March 1st. Thus, an extension is not needed for the state of emergency, but it is also unnecessary to address this issue through new legislation.

The only issue needing attention, that wasn't succinctly or adequately addressed in Whitmer's executive orders, is that of licensing and fees. I would, therefore, urge you to add a simple provision that allows license documentation, fees or applications due to state or local governmental departments or agencies between March 24, 2020 and April 30, 2020 to be given an extension until May 31, 2020.

Most of you are doing the right thing and trying to restore our freedoms quickly while accounting for these other needs. A few, however, are making things unnecessarily complicated and trying to stop the legislature from meeting this week to address these issues in a timely fashion. All of you know that if these issues are not voted on in the House this week, allowing the Senate to vote on them next week (after the 5-day layover), they will be used as excuses for another unnecessary extension of the state of emergency. Let's cut the crap, allow people to get back to providing for their families, and start focusing state time, attention and resources on those actually impacted by COVID19. 55 executive orders since January, with 34 still in effect, the totality controlling virtually every aspect of our lives. The time to stand up and do the right thing is now. Convene the House, vote on a simple bill(s) to address these issues, and pass it along to the Senate in a timely fashion. It's that simple.

Your fellow Michigander,

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