

86th House District

Representing Union and parts of
Marion Counties

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Committees

Armed Services & Veterans
Affairs, Finance, Finance
Subcommittee on
Agriculture, Development
and Natural Resources,
Higher Education

Tracy Richardson State Representative

May 4, 2020

Dear Residents of the 86th District,

I've heard many of you express your concerns about reopening Ohio for business and protecting your liberties. I want to share with you some thoughts about the COVID-19 pandemic and direction of our state.

What began in China has swept across the globe, threatening our lives and livelihood.

In Ohio, Governor DeWine, along with his staff, declared an emergency and issued Executive Orders intended to immediately address the crisis. While I am not the governor, I believe the goal was to allow time to flatten the curve thus ensuring our healthcare systems were not overwhelmed. In essence, the intent was to protect all Ohioans while assessing the threat posed by the contagious, life threatening virus.

I support the hard work and initial leadership of Governor DeWine. He has worked tirelessly in leading us through this crisis and for that I am extremely grateful! I have, however, become increasingly frustrated by the limited ability of the legislature to impact the decisions of the executive branch as we seek to transition out of a crisis phase.

My frustration stems from the lack of input from the legislature in the protection of individual freedom and the pace of re-opening the state. Freedom must be protected and preserved for us all. The balance government must maintain is the preservation of our Constitutional rights with the need to act responsibly to provide for the common good. Finding this balance is the debate we face.

I favor sensible, responsible oversight which limits the role of the government. We are now in a "recovery phase" and have transitioned from crisis management of the COVID-19 outbreak. None of us has a crystal ball to know what the future looks like, but we must move forward to protect our economy now while promoting safety. Ohio is moving forward.

Some argue it isn't enough. Some are concerned that it is too fast. I've heard from many of you and understand. I believe at the very least, we need to be allowing small businesses, those on

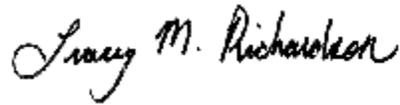
“Main Street,” to open at their own discretion. These business owners who have small numbers of employees and limited customers at a time can safely manage their operations. They should be allowed to do so.

We also need to create policies to expedite unemployment benefits, address the executive powers granted in state law, protect businesses, continue to support our healthcare workers and first responders, open daycares, and much more.

As part of the transition to get Ohio moving forward, the Ohio House of Representatives is returning to committee work in person at the Statehouse. We also have an Economic Recovery Task Force that has been remotely engaged for weeks to hear from business leaders.

I will continue to do my best to keep our State moving forward responsibly and in a way that protects our rights and our freedoms!

Sincerely and Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tracy M. Richardson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tracy Richardson
State Representative, Ohio's 86th House District