



The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor of the State of Texas  
P.O. Box 12428  
Austin, Texas 78711

April 14, 2020

Governor Abbott:

Thank you for demonstrating solid and steady leadership during this historic crisis caused by COVID-19, commonly known as the Wuhan virus. Texans have responded with great courage, kindness, and tireless efforts. We constantly monitor the public health situation in our districts and have been listening to our fellow Texans that are struggling to cope with the pandemic. They are demanding a change in how we move forward.

The clear messages we are hearing lead us to this conclusion: Texas must immediately increase healthcare and business activity while maintaining protections for the most vulnerable Texans. Accordingly, we respectfully ask that you loosen your state-wide executive order to the greatest extent possible while giving local jurisdictions the flexibility to respond to local conditions.

The simple truth is that while the risks from the Wuhan virus are credible and serious, the risks from Texans foregoing ordinary healthcare procedures unrelated to the virus, an increase in suicides and domestic abuse, and severe financial stress are also credible and serious. The question is not whether Texans must assume risks during this time; rather, the question is: which is the greater risk? We believe that a decline in public health due to a lack of ordinary healthcare, and the risk of Great Depression-like financial destruction require us to change our current response to the Wuhan virus.

Hospitals in Texas have adequate capacity; they have not been overrun. Hospital staff and medical professionals now have their eyes wide open to the Wuhan virus. While protective equipment supplies remain a concern, prudent conservation measures are in place and restrictions can be reinstated if the need arises. Doctors have told us loud and clear that now is the time to begin providing more of the ordinary healthcare procedures that keep our population healthy. The healthcare systems in our communities are prepared to bend, but not break, should new outbreaks arise.


Business owners in Texas also appreciate the risks from the Wuhan virus. Many businesses that have been deemed “essential” have found ways to mitigate the risk within their stores. Other businesses are prepared to do the same. Marking floors for social distancing, limiting the number of customers, wearing masks, and providing special hours for vulnerable customers are just some of the ways business have adapted. Texas can gradually begin to ramp up, while those with underlying conditions continue to shelter-in-place until the need no longer exists. Regardless, it is time to give more businesses the same opportunities to open for business while mitigating risks.

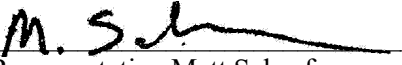
It is ultimately the individual Texan’s responsibility to keep themselves safe, and also to ensure the safety of those who cannot protect themselves. The public should continue to receive a strong message regarding social distancing, avoiding unnecessary close contact with people, hand washing, wearing masks, cleaning surfaces, and following CDC guidelines. As leaders and government officials, we must do everything we

can to ensure the freedoms needed for Texans to thrive are maintained to the highest degree possible in a manner that ensures public health.

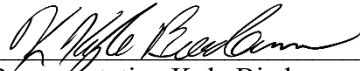
We understand that any decision you make will be challenged by some and bring forth a new set of issues to face. We will stay with you in the fight. We are praying daily for you, and all of our leaders to have wisdom and discernment. Your leadership has been strong and steady, and for that we are truly grateful.


Sincerely,


  
Representative Mayes Middleton  
Texas House District 23  
Chairman, Texas Freedom Caucus

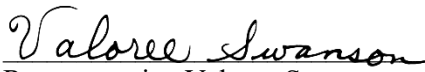
  
Representative Matt Schaefer  
Texas House District 6  
Vice-Chairman

  
Representative Matt Krause  
Texas House District 93  
Secretary/Treasurer

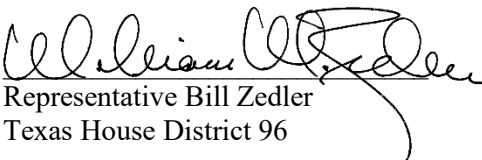
  
Representative Kyle Biedermann  
Texas House District 73

  
Representative Briscoe Cain  
Texas House District 128

  
Representative Mike Lang  
Texas House District 60

  
Representative Valoree Swanson  
Texas House District 150

  
Representative Tony Tinderholt  
Texas House District 94

  
Representative Bill Zedler  
Texas House District 96