



May 13, 2020

Dear Lawmaker,

Massachusetts has lost almost 1,000,000 jobs in just 38 days. More than one in four workers are now without work. As you may know, Massachusetts state government is borrowing money from the federal government to pay for unemployment benefits as its unemployment insurance trust fund faced the largest decline among all states according to a recent WSJ report. The forced closures associated with the coronavirus response have devastated our state economy. According to the Retailer's Association, Governor Baker's executive order to shut down "non-essential" businesses is the most restrictive in the country.

It's becoming clear that the economic shutdown is creating two distinct worlds in Massachusetts—a world of white-collar workers who can work from home and a world of blue-collar workers who can't. For white collar workers, the shutdown is an inconvenience. They continue to work remotely. Their paycheck still comes in, and they continue to make their mortgage payments. The reality for blue-collar workers is very different. It is a world of furloughs and unemployment queues. They are deferring mortgage payments or behind on rent because they are not getting paid. Many blue-collar workers do not even know if they will have a job to return to when this is all over. This fact was first raised by an April 8 Pioneer Institute study and still holds true today.

Massachusetts Fiscal Alliance believes every business is essential, and every worker is essential. They are essential to the business owners who spent their lives building the business, and they are essential to the workers and their families who depend on them for their livelihoods. They are essential to the customers who depend on their goods and services. Massachusetts cannot continue to force businesses that are able to safely re-open to stay shut down.

Governor Baker and other elected officials, including state lawmakers, have done a great job communicating with the public the harm of the virus and how to stay safe. The health care facilities have not been overrun and the curve is flattening. Now it's time our State House leaders show they trust the people of Massachusetts by allowing them to safely re-open our communities. The Governor needs to put his trust into the small business community that forms the backbone of our economy.

The Governor's executive order to shut down non-essential businesses is set to be reevaluated on May 18. As a statehouse leader, we ask that you urge Governor Charlie Baker and Lt. Governor Karyn Polito to allow for businesses and their workers to safely and responsibly re-open.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Laurie Belsito". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Laurie Belsito
Legislative Director