

MICHIGAN



LEGISLATURE

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer
P.O. Box 30013
Lansing, Michigan 48909

Elizabeth Hertel, Director
Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
P.O. Box 30195
Lansing, Michigan 48909

The Honorable Gov. Gretchen Whitmer and Director Hertel,

Throughout the past many months, residents have struggled to navigate life under the constraints of confusing orders from Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration. Current orders from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services not only impose restrictions on personal behaviors but also impose confusing restrictions on local governments and bodies and their ability to meet and serve their local communities.

Across the state, local Boards of Review are preparing to convene for their required organizational meeting of March 2, 2021. These entities are hindered from following requirements issued by the Michigan Department of Treasury because of the most recent order of Feb. 4, 2021, issued by MDHHS. In the MDHHS order, gatherings are limited to no more than 10 individuals from no more than two households.

The practical impact of the MDHHS order is to limit residents' access to their local government bodies. The Boards of Review cannot allow all the members necessary to be present to conduct business AND comply with the order from MDHHS.

State government should not be issuing and enforcing orders that limit residents' access to their local elected officials and the community entities necessary to carry out the functions of municipal life. It is the responsibility of government to consider the impact of its policies and account for unintended consequences. In short, it is the responsibility of government to use common sense.

The safety of our residents and our communities is important. Surely there is a way to allow our local Boards of Review to adopt reasonable health and safety protocols in order to meet and be available for residents to resolve tax concerns. A board should be able to accommodate social distancing requirements and require masks to satisfy the MDHHS order without having to abide by arbitrary limits on gatherings based on numbers of individuals and households. We can all agree that we should work to ensure the Boards of Review can meet and be available for citizen participation.

We can make ourselves available to discuss our suggestions for commonsense improvements in greater detail.

Respectfully,

Handwritten signature of Dan Lauwers in blue ink.

Dan Lauwers
Majority Floor Leader
State Senator, 25th District

Handwritten signature of Jim Runestad in blue ink.

Jim Runestad
State Senator, 15th District

Handwritten signature of John Bizon in blue ink.

John Bizon, M.D.
State Senator, 19th District

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Jon Bumstead
State Senator, 34th District



Aric Nesbitt
State Senator, 26th District



Curtis S. VanderWall
State Senator, 35th District



Tom Barrett
State Senator, 24th District



Dale Zorn
State Senator, 17th District



Kevin Daley
State Senator, 31st District