

**Congress of the United States**  
Washington, D.C. 20515

April 30, 2020

The Honorable J. B. Pritzker  
Governor  
State of Illinois  
100 West Randolph Street, Suite 16-100  
Chicago, IL 60601-3112

Dear Governor Pritzker:

We are grateful for the health professionals, civil servants, and Illinois residents who have followed the guidance provided by you and President Trump to slow the spread of COVID-19. The actions taken by so many have kept the health systems functioning and prevented the systemic collapse so many feared.

Fortunately, the health system has been tempered by an increase in capacity, improved testing, and increased personal protective equipment, which has mitigated the risk of its collapse. And now, the greater threat looming over Illinois is the collapse of our economy if your Stay-at-Home order continues in its current form. It is unreasonable and untenable to continue on this course for the duration of the pandemic. We must, therefore, work with our public health experts to establish a path forward that no longer ignores the economy that feeds and fuels our families and society.

The State of Illinois must begin a phased reopening of the private and public institutions that form the foundation of our economy. Failure to do so poses a great threat to the lives and livelihoods of far more Illinois residents through unemployment, homelessness, crime, substance abuse, and suicide. It is imperative that you develop a reopening plan that gets Illinois and its people back to work while mitigating the inherent health risks of COVID-19. We would like to work with you to develop a plan for the State to strategically and safely reopen its economy.

As we discussed on the call yesterday, the pandemic is impacting different parts of the State in different ways, and like you, we believe a phased reopening can and should begin in those communities that have had fewer cases. According to the information provided on the Illinois Department of Public Health website, there are at least 35 counties in Illinois with less than ten cases, and at least five that have yet to see any cases at all. Improved testing, with guidance on how to isolate and contain outbreaks, will be critical to any reopening plan. On Thursday of last week, the House passed H.R. 266, the fourth piece of emergency legislation passed by Congress thus far. Between all four of these legislative packages, Congress has dedicated more than \$41 billion specifically for testing, vaccine research and development, and therapeutics. With this

funding, Illinois will have the resources necessary for a robust testing system, and we will ensure the State has the flexibility to create a regional approach.

As we've seen in other states – Ohio, Texas, and Colorado in particular – governments have worked with the Coronavirus Task Force to end their Stay-at-Home orders and provide the guidance necessary for businesses and individuals to make informed decisions on how they can safely return to work. Some have proposed allowing certain low risk businesses to open in May. They've also given public guidance to reduce the risk of contracting the virus. We are supportive of these approaches, and we strongly encourage and will support similar actions by Illinois, in consultation with health officials and the Task Force.

We have stayed in constant contact with local leaders and stakeholders within our Congressional Districts and we recognize how important those conversations will remain going forward. The fact is communities across the State are desperate for a plan to navigate the reopening of businesses in a responsible, reasonable manner. There is a strong desire among the people we represent to move forward with a plan focused on balancing our health and our economy. It should not be an either/or proposition. We continue to welcome the opportunity to work with you in a bipartisan manner to achieve the best possible outcomes for the people of Illinois, providing them the tools to stay healthy and make a living.

Again, thank you for your efforts to manage the State's response to COVID-19. We stand ready to work with you to ensure Illinoisans have the resources they need to live alongside this terrible virus while remaining cautious, vigilant, and flexible during these uncertain times.

Sincerely,



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Adam Kinzinger  
Member of Congress



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John Shimkus  
Member of Congress



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Rodney Davis  
Member of Congress



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Mike Bost  
Member of Congress



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Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress