



August 26, 2020

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois
207 State House
Springfield, IL. 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker:

As a Chamber of Commerce, we routinely advocate on behalf of our members in several areas of interest. Today, on behalf of the Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry and our neighboring chambers we stand together and write to you to share our very serious concerns with the recent decision to implement what we believe are unfair restrictions targeted at the restaurant and bar industry.

One of the greatest and most displeasing issues is the fact that our Region 7 has not been afforded the same opportunity as the businesses in Region 4 to reduce the number of inside patrons at bars and restaurants before moving onto harsher restrictions such as what are in place beginning today. These businesses are part of an industry that has been one of, if not the most, severely affected during this pandemic and to place these additional measures on them will be catastrophic to their survival. We ask for immediate consideration to reverse your decision and allow these establishments to remain open for indoor seating at a capacity of the lesser of 25 individuals or 25% of capacity. These businesses deserve the same opportunities as the Metro East

region and now face issues of scrambling to use up inventory and secure outdoor seating equipment and supplies.

Yes, they will adapt and do what is necessary to keep their doors open. Why though, does one industry need to bear the brunt of the responsibility to reduce positivity rates throughout the region. They have had to pivot and re-create once and are a determined group, but this decision is just going to pull more resources from them. It is our hope that they will all survive these latest restrictions, but nothing is guaranteed.

It is unfortunate that recent spikes have driven our region over the 8% threshold. However, we fully support actions to mitigate the spread of the Coronavirus through proper mask wearing, social distancing, hand washing, and additional methods of sanitization. We also believe that the great majority of our business members are following these guidelines. At the beginning of this pandemic, it was our understanding that we all needed to accept the responsibility of lessening the burden on the healthcare system and decrease the death rate. With that said, we believe that our medical providers have more than adequate resources and availability to serve those in need. In addition, we do not see an increase in the death rate in this region and in fact it seems to be steadily decreasing.

Finally, in light of this detrimental decision, we ask that the State and the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity immediately set up a system to automatically approve all of those affected by this mandate to receive funds in the next round of the Business Interruption Grants. It is the least that our government can do for those that continually face an uphill climb to run their business. We would be more than happy to hold further discussion on this proposal to see that this industry can be accommodated.

Sincerely,

Jen Howard, President, Joliet Region Chamber of Commerce & Industry

Kevin O’Keeffe, Executive Director, Bolingbrook Area Chamber of Commerce

Tasha Marsaglia, Executive Director, Plainfield Area Chamber of Commerce

Annette Parker, Executive Director, Lockport Chamber of Commerce

Dr. Therese M. Bogs, President, Monee Chamber of Commerce

Glenn Pasiewicz, Executive Director, Heritage Corridor Business Alliance

Kris Pasquini, Interim Executive Director, Frankfort Chamber of Commerce

Reba Osborne, Director of Government Affairs, Naperville Area Chamber of Commerce

Melissa M. Fedora, Executive Director, Mokena Chamber of Commerce

Angela Morrey, Executive Director, Kankakee County Chamber of Commerce

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