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Committees:
Education, *Ranking*
Joint Education Oversight Committee, *Ranking*
Agriculture & Natural Resources
Government Oversight & Reform
Judiciary

Senator Teresa Fedor
11th District

March 12, 2020

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor, State of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine:

I write to ask some clarifying questions about the state's response to COVID-19 and to request certain measures be taken to contain the spread of this pandemic. The public needs adequate information, supports, and positive coping mechanisms to stay out of crisis. We need to launch an information campaign that takes into account the limited accessibility of the internet.

1. How is information being disseminated to the public?
2. Specifically, how will this information be spread to those who do not have cable or broadband access?
3. What are we going to tell individuals without health insurance or a doctor when they have been in contact with a diagnosed patient or fall ill?
4. Do we have a plan to cover the cost of testing and care for the uninsured and underinsured populations?
5. How are we supporting our local health departments and public hospitals?
6. Are physicians offices receiving guidance from the state?
7. Who needs to receive a test?
8. Do emergency rooms have access to testing capabilities?
9. Where are the tests located?
10. How do local governments and hospitals request tests?
11. Will there be a state program to provide food to food insecure homes in the case of a shut down?
12. For public clarification, who would need to be quarantined and what would that look like for them and their families?
13. Who would need isolation and what does that look like for them and their families?

As you know, we have hundreds of thousands of Ohioans who do not have health insurance and/or access to a doctor. We also know that people without insurance use the emergency room for their primary care.

These concerns must be addressed to control the spread of the virus before our healthcare system becomes overwhelmed.

The World Health Organization has additional tests available so we need to accept these and any other test that are currently available in other countries. Communities must receive the support they need to protect themselves, and our state must take proactive measures to avoid having to be reactive in a crisis.

We must develop an emergency preparedness plan to deal with the impact of a statewide shutdown, should it come to that. We know thousands of food insecure people will need access to food if we require them to stay home. While dealing with one crisis, there must be foresight to avoid additional negative outcomes for our communities.

Lastly, as a veteran, I strongly urge you to deploy at minimum the Ohio Army National Guard medical units across the state to increase the level of testing and keep infected individuals out of our hospitals where the virus can be more easily spread. Launching drive-up testing units, like Denver is doing, will alleviate this issue. These should be stationed in the areas of highest poverty. Waiting to test until people show symptoms is irresponsible when we know people are highly contagious before symptoms appear. We have seen how effective these measures have been in other countries, and we have seen what happens when communities wait. These requests are responsible policy and will reduce the negative impact on our state and its communities.

While I applaud your efforts thus far to contain this pandemic, we must do more to protect the most vulnerable. It is my hope that you will take these concerns into serious consideration, take swift action to address them and brief legislators and their staff moving forward. The Ohio Department of Health and your office need to keep pushing testing information. People do not understand why they can not be tested or if they should be tested. Constituents are calling our offices, and our lack of additional knowledge is worrisome.

I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Teresa Fedor".

Senator Teresa Fedor
Ohio Senate District 11
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