



LYNN FINDLEY
SENATE DISTRICT 30

MARK OWENS
HOUSE DISTRICT 60

April 27, 2021

Honorable Governor Kate Brown
900 Court St. NE, Room 254
Salem, OR 97301

Director Patrick Allen
Oregon Health Authority
800 NE Oregon St,
Suite 550 Portland, OR 97232

Honorable Governor Brown and Director Allen,

Respectfully, enough is enough. Our small businesses and communities cannot endure another extreme adjustment of county risk levels and further shutdowns of the magnitude you have announced today, April 27, 2021. We have been told to follow the science and this is what we have been doing—the data simply does not support your decision, and our businesses are being unfairly and unreasonably targeted. The additional \$20 million of support for counties does not adequately address the needs nor does it get to solving the roots of this problem.

For over a year, our small businesses, employers and families have endured hardships unlike any before. Shut down after shut down have resulted in permanent business closures, tens of thousands of unemployed Oregonians, lost revenues, bankruptcies, and more, at the hands of these closures. The constant waiting games and shifting of county risk levels and regulations are impossible to navigate.

There is no evidence to show that our small businesses spread COVID-19 while following the public safety measures that have been put in place, nor is there any evidence to show that keeping our small businesses open would result in higher numbers. Your offices need to make the tough calls to meet the virus where it is and where it is spreading, not to simply find the easiest target.

We have followed the stringent protocols put into place by OSHA, OHA and your office's executive orders. Many of our businesses have been closed longer than they have been open. There is no data showing small businesses, restaurants and bars, gyms and fitness facilities are responsible for high transmission rates – in fact, it is just the opposite.

For over a year, you and your offices have had a difficult job and that is not lost on us. What is also not lost is you have had the tools to manage this public health crisis and ensure our hospitals do not reach max capacity. Our front line workers have sacrificed their safety and health to protect Oregonians in every manner possible, and they have not received the support they need to manage this public health crisis. OHA and hospitals have systematically reduced the staffed beds in Oregon over the past six months. The reporting of these numbers and the metrics by which they are measured continue to change and without notice or transparent information. This inconsistency is alarming and certainly prevents the ability to fully understand the circumstances by which decisions are being made.

The disorganized, disorderly and delayed roll out of vaccines only added to this chaos and mistrust. Even now as vaccines are available, appointments are difficult to find, and our counties don't have what they need to provide enough vaccinations to our citizens. Even still, Oregonians are seeking vaccinations as quickly as possible to ensure their safety, the safety of others, and the re-opening of our state.

Frankly, our small businesses are not the problem. They should not be penalized again or further; it is not their responsibility to shoulder the burden of COVID-19. It is the responsibility of your offices to make decisions, backed by scientific evidence, to help Oregonians through this step in the pandemic.

We strongly urge you for the future of our state and the safety of Oregonians to reconsider this new phase of county risk levels that push our state further away from stability and recovery.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lynn Findley". The signature is stylized with a large initial "L" and a prominent flourish at the end.

Senator Lynn Findley
Senate District 30

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Owens". The signature is more compact and less stylized than the one to its left.

Representative Mark Owens
House District 60