



April 24, 2020

SPECIAL EDITION - 7



The recent economic downturn has been rapid and hard-hitting, negatively affecting nearly every industry in our economy that was robust just a few months ago. In order to reverse this trend, we must reopen our Texas economy. The last two months have also allowed Texans to educate themselves on the appropriate public health guidelines and be prepared to continue to care for themselves, their families, and their neighbors. Texans are capable of making sound decisions and deserve the option of getting back to work.

I sent a letter to Governor Greg Abbott this week expressing my desire to reopen Texas allowing consumers to choose if and how they want to reengage in the marketplace to the extent they feel safe with the understanding that businesses are financially incentivized to create safe conditions for consumers.

Businesses, schools, health care providers, churches, courts, recreational facilities, and organizations should open as a result of compliance, data, and the sound decision-making capabilities of their respective leaders. Consumers will naturally reengage to the extent they feel safe, and businesses have a financial incentive to create the conditions of a safe environment without government mandates

requiring businesses to be closed based on a designation of essential or non-essential business.

Businesses and organizations can adjust their policies to meet the needs of those they serve more effectively and expeditiously in accordance with public health guidelines and consumer expectations than government can. Some businesses may choose to reopen immediately and safely, others may choose not to reopen immediately, and others may provide employees telecommuting options to take care of their families and workers. This should be a decision on the part of business owners and the market, not government.

In this newsletter, you will find a copy of my letter to Governor Abbott as well as state and federal updates. Thank you for all you are doing to engage responsibly to stop the spread of COVID-19. Stay well and stay safe.





Angela S. Paxton  
State Senator, District 8

April 23, 2020

The Honorable Greg Abbott  
Governor, State of Texas  
Texas Capitol  
1100 Congress Avenue, Room 2S.1  
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Abbott,

The impact of your leadership is slowing the spread of COVID-19 and is deeply appreciated in Senate District 8.

As data-driven confidence in the state of public health begins to rise, we must waste no time in undertaking measures to inspire confidence that economic health can also be restored. Record-breaking unemployment in the wake of the COVID-19 shutdown represents unprecedented numbers of individuals no longer able to provide for their own families because of lost wages and lost insurance. This tragedy is sadly accompanied by a markedly higher suicide rate in Texas compared to the same time period last year and increases in domestic and child abuse calls.

Reopening the Texas economy is urgent so that families and businesses can once again flourish in physical, mental and economic well-being. These premises will guide the behavior of the marketplace:

- a. Consumers will choose to re-engage in the marketplace to the extent they feel safe.
- b. Businesses are financially incentivized to create those safe conditions for consumers.

With these premises in mind and based on common sense and constituent input, I submit the following for your consideration in re-opening the Texas economy:

1. Immediately open the marketplace (healthcare providers, businesses, restaurants, churches, courts, recreational facilities, organizations, etc.) based on compliance rather than a designation of "essential" and "non-essential." Any entity may offer its services provided it can do so in compliance with the already commonly accepted health guidelines of handwashing, good hygiene and social distancing.

Many entities have proposed specialized guidelines based on their knowledge of their industries and clientele. Attached, you will find letters from pastors who represent 175,000 church members from all over Texas. This effort was spearheaded by Pastor Gerald Brooks of Grace Community Church in Plano, SD 8's largest city. You will also find a letter outlining a plan from Linda Paulk, CEO of Sky Ranch, a provider of outdoor recreation to thousands of Texas families who benefit physically, mentally and spiritually year after year.

2. Based on daily monitoring of COVID-19 hospitalizations and deaths AND availability of PPE, ventilators and hospital bed capacity, allow counties to redefine (loosen or tighten) local compliance guidelines on a weekly basis.
3. Hi-risk populations such as nursing homes should continue to practice the extra precautions currently in place.
4. Announce an immediate, one-time "Reopen Texas" statewide sales tax holiday to celebrate and kickoff the reopening of the Texas economy.

The last six weeks have allowed Texans to educate themselves on the CDC guidelines and be prepared to continue to care for themselves and their neighbors. Consumers will naturally reengage to the extent they feel safe, and businesses have a financial incentive to create the conditions of a safe environment without government mandates designating businesses to be closed based on a designation of "essential" or "non-essential."

Thank you again for your courageous and steady leadership during these challenging times. It is an honor to serve Texas with you.

Blessings,



Angela Paxton  
Texas State Senator, District 8

## COVID-19 STATS

### COVID-19 STATS

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) is [tracking COVID-19 cases](#) and updates its site with the latest information each day by noon (CST).

- Texas has 22,806 confirmed cases of COVID-19.

- There are 609 confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Collin County residents, and

There are 2,763 confirmed cases of COVID-19 involving Dallas County residents.

## FEDERAL UPDATES

[The U.S. Department of Labor](#) has published a [Coronavirus Resource](#) page containing all relevant COVID-19 guidance, frequently asked questions, and press releases. You may also obtain agency-specific COVID-19 information through the following links:

- [Employment and Training Administration](#) – This website outlines the unemployment insurance resources available through the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. It also describes the process for filing an unemployment insurance claim in the state where you worked.
- [Occupational Safety and Health Administration](#) – The OSHA website offers a variety of resources (alerts, interim enforcement guidance, control and prevention, etc.) designed to protect American workers from COVID-19.
- [Wage and Hour Division](#) – The WHD website provides fact sheets, posters, and frequently asked questions on implementing new Paid Sick Leave and Expanded Family Medical Leave.

## STATE OF TEXAS UPDATES

### Retail to Go

Phase one of [Governor Abbott's Retail To-Go](#) program for businesses starts this weekend. Customers will place an order online or by phone for pick-up with the retailer. Customers will receive their purchases at the curb or other external location designated by the retailer and an employee will put the items into the customer's vehicle.

## **Sales Tax Exemption on Emergency Preparation Supplies**

Certain emergency preparation supplies are tax free during the [sales tax holiday](#) April 25-27, 2020. There is no limit on the number of qualifying items you can purchase, and you do not need to give an exemption certificate to claim the exemption.