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Minority Leader Tim Lanane  
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14 April 2020

Governor Eric Holcomb  
State of Indiana  
200 W. Washington St.  
Indianapolis, IN 46204

Re: COVID-19 Response moving forward

Governor Holcomb,

We want to thank you for the actions you have taken to mitigate the spread of the virus in our state. Our continued actions will hopefully continue to flatten the curve of this virus's spread. Although we do see many Hoosiers staying home to keep people healthy, the continued fight against COVID-19 has revealed new concerns that we must face together as state leaders. We ultimately want to address three serious concerns: the issue of worker safety, the distribution of PPE across the state and the composition of your Economic Relief and Recovery Team.

Your executive order 20-18 made it clear that essential businesses can stay open but must follow social distancing and other CDC guidelines to promote a safe, healthy workplace. These include spacing employees at least six feet apart, providing hand sanitizer and separating vulnerable populations. Unfortunately, a growing number of our constituents are reporting that their workplaces are not following the guidelines in the Executive Order, making them unsafe places at this time. Employees are being forced to work within close proximity of each other, and masks are either not required or not allowed.

The evidence of this noncompliance is clear. For example, COVID-19 is spreading rapidly through our steel plants, with cases growing each day. We are aware that these concerns have been brought to your attention by way of District 7 Director Michael Millsap's recent letter on behalf of the United Steelworkers. We share Director Millsap's concerns. Just yesterday, an employee at U.S. Steel's Gary Works died of coronavirus infection. These cases concern us even more when we are told that steelworkers are not allowed to practice proper distancing practices and must work practically elbow-to-elbow. Masks are disregarded as unnecessary to employees' safety. Obviously, these working conditions go against CDC guidelines and, ultimately, against your own executive order. Therefore, for essential businesses, we have these questions:

- What investigations are done by the executive branch when credible reports of employer non-compliance come to your office?
- What are your methods for enforcing your executive order and ensuring that Hoosiers who continue to work at essential businesses are being kept safe?
- Will an agency similar to IOSHA be put in charge of oversight for essential businesses to ensure their adherence to your executive orders?
- Will your administration define methods that businesses must use to identify workers who may have the coronavirus, such as monitoring employees' temperatures?

The problems being seen with essential businesses expose another continued issue our state faces. We still do not have adequate PPE for our workforce. Health care workers, emergency medical personnel and other front-line Hoosiers desperately need the proper protective equipment to fight this pandemic. However, as the CDC broadens its recommendations for all Americans to wear masks, the need for PPE of all kinds increases tremendously. Therefore, we pose these questions on the availability of PPE in Indiana:

- We need to double or triple our efforts in obtaining and distributing PPE to not only front-line workers, but also to other essential businesses such as skilled trades. What steps are you willing to take to ramp up our collection of PPE for more than just our health care workers?
- Are you willing to define in an executive order that PPE requirements must apply to all essential businesses and their workers, not just those in health care environments?
- As this virus may be in our country for many more months, what plans does your administration have to develop protocols for who will need PPE in the future?

Finally, you recently revealed the members appointed to Indiana's Economic Relief and Recovery Team. While we agree that we will need a comprehensive team to tackle the economic problems COVID-19 is placing on our state, we believe that our state's response will only be successful with the ideas of a diverse group of minds at the table who represent all Hoosiers. We are concerned that no Democrat was named to be a part of the recovery team, even as Democrats represent a wide number of communities across our state. To make sure that the most comprehensive and effective plan is produced, we ask that you appoint members of varying political affiliations. It is also noteworthy that no member of the team is a person of color or represents any other minority community. Only when members of both political parties and all segments of Indiana's population work together can we hope to make a plan that will benefit everyone in Indiana, not just a select few.

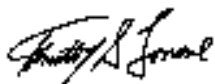
We know that Hoosiers' safety is important to all of us, so we hope to work with you to tackle these continuing problems. Let's work to make sure that all essential Hoosiers can work in a safe environment. Let's work together to produce, purchase and distribute adequate quantities of PPE. Let's work to make sure that all parties can come to the table to help keep our state strong in the future.

Indiana is "A State that Works." We simply must acknowledge to fellow Hoosiers that it "Works for All."

Thank you for your attention to our concerns including those we share with Director Millsap as stated above. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Members of the Indiana Senate Democratic Caucus



Tim Lanane  
Minority Leader



Jean Breaux  
Asst. Leader



Karen Tallian  
State Senator



David Niezgodski  
State Senator



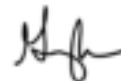
Lonnie Randolph  
State Senator



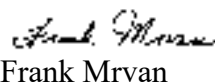
Eddie Melton  
State Senator



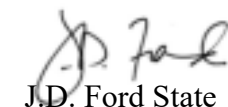
Mark Stoops  
State Senator



Greg Taylor  
State Senator



Frank Mrvan  
State Senator



J.D. Ford  
State Senator