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COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HARRISBURG

May 26, 2020

Governor Tom Wolf
508 Main Capitol Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Dear Governor Wolf,

Thank you for your leadership during these difficult times as the state continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. We were pleased to see your announcement that all counties in Pennsylvania would move into the “yellow phase” of reopening by June 5, which will relieve a significant burden that is placed on our small businesses that have been closed for months to prevent the spread of the disease. But while this change helps many of our retail businesses, other businesses have been left out, which is why we are requesting that you amend the “yellow phase” business rules to allow hair salons, barber shops, and restaurants to safely reopen as well.

There is no doubt that we have made significant progress in flattening the curve of the COVID-19 pandemic, and our citizens and business owners have done their part in social distancing and adopting responsible mitigation measures. While the phased reopening of the state gives hope to many business owners, a continuation of a prolonged closure could be disastrous for the small businesses that are forced to remain closed. Protecting lives is a priority, but we also need to make sure our businesses do not close their doors permanently after this pandemic is over.

A majority of states that made pandemic-related business closures have already announced some reopening of restaurants, and many have made similar announcements for barber shops and hair salons. This has included, for one or both types of businesses, nearby states that Pennsylvania had announced an intention to coordinate reopening plans with, including Connecticut, Delaware, and Rhode Island, and our neighbors Maryland and Ohio.

Reopening can and should be done safely, with the Department of Health issuing strong guidelines including limits to capacity, use of protective equipment, and implementation of cleaning procedures. In addition to following Department of Health guidelines, open businesses should implement the guidelines of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the COVID-19 reopening guidance of the National Restaurant Association and American Industrial Hygiene Association, as applicable.

We further propose that restaurants, barber shops, and hair salons be limited to 50 percent of their capacity limit during the “yellow phase” and 80 percent during the “green phase,” revisited after 21 days in the “green phase” to consider expanded capacity as warranted, and that all restaurants located in “yellow phase” counties to be able to use outdoor seating, including adjacent parking capacity, in

accordance with local ordinances and PLCB guidelines. These restrictions would strike a balance to ensure social distancing and prevent potentially dangerous overcrowding in those establishments. We hope you will consider allowing Pennsylvania to join many other states, including our neighbors, in relieving the pressure on our businesses by reopening restaurants, hair salons, and barber shops when additional counties enter the “yellow phase” on June 5.

Thank you again for all of your efforts, and for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully submitted,

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State Representative
146th Legislative District

Steve Malagari
State Representative
53rd Legislative District

Christina Sappey
State Representative
158th Legislative District

Tina Davis
State Representative
141st Legislative District

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165th Legislative District

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