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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

LEE CHATFIELD
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TO: All Members and Staff

FROM: Speaker Lee Chatfield

DATE: March 16, 2020

RE: Protocol for committees, meetings and other interactions thru April 20, 2020

During this public health emergency, it is our responsibility as elected officials to lead by example and follow the advice of the medical community. As reflected in the memorandum sent by Doug Simon last week, we should work to limit participation in large gatherings and practice social distancing to assist in protecting public health. To that end, I ask that you additionally consider the following:

Session and Committee Hearings: House session will be held on an as-needed basis for the next several weeks and the House floor agenda will reflect the same standard. Floor action on legislation reported from committee will slow and agenda items will be reduced to those already on the floor and those with true time constraints, as well as those deemed necessary to continue the essential functions of state government and address this public health emergency. Any member who is at higher risk for COVID-19 because of age or a serious health problem, as well as those experiencing symptoms of illness, is encouraged not to attend and will be fully excused from session. Members who do not attend session for personal health reasons or out of concern for others that they are in regular contact with will be similarly excused.

I also strongly recommend committee chairs postpone any committee hearings that are not time sensitive or do not address this emergency through April 20, 2020. There will likely be case-by-case exceptions made for the Appropriations Committee to ensure we maintain momentum on completing the budget on time and for other time sensitive policy issues. If there are budget or policy committee hearings or agenda items that are time sensitive, please contact Josiah Kissling in my office (jkissling@house.mi.gov) to discuss a plan for such items. When such time-sensitive hearings are held, committee chairs are directed to excuse absent members who do not attend due to health or safety concerns.

Lansing Meetings: The Capitol Building and the House Office Building have postponed or canceled events for the next several weeks. I urge members and staff to also postpone existing meetings or convert meetings to conference calls. Until directed otherwise, buildings remain open, but members and staff should focus on remote communication and participation when possible to slow the spread of the virus. To ensure constituent services are not interrupted when working from home, office calls can be forwarded to outside lines.

In-District Meetings and Events: I encourage members to limit hosting and participating in physical gatherings, especially at facilities with a higher concentration of older adults, i.e. senior centers, medical facilities, etc. Central

staff for each caucus can assist in converting scheduled coffee hours and other in-district events into tele-townhalls. They can also help provide communication tools such as e-news blasts, social media graphics, and constituent correspondence to inform citizens of these changes.

Legislative Services Bureau: Members and staff should limit requests made to the Legislative Service Bureau (LSB). LSB will have limited availability going forward, and reduced bill requests will allow staff at LSB to focus on requests necessary to perform the essential functions of state government. Please coordinate with the Bureau's staff for deliveries of bluebacks, greenbacks, greybacks and orangebacks. All other deliveries will be made electronically.