

**MEDFORD**



**BUSINESS  
ASSOCIATION**

May 26, 2020

The Honorable Phil Murphy  
Governor of New Jersey  
The State House  
P.O. Box 001  
Trenton, NJ 08625

Re: COVID-19 Restrictions on Small Retail Business

Dear Governor Murphy:

The Medford Business Association is a not for-profit organization that supports and promotes mainly small businesses in Medford Township, Burlington County. I write to you as its president.

First, we sincerely appreciate the difficulties that you and our legislature have encountered in balancing the competing considerations and interests in addressing the COVID-19 crisis. We understand that it is truly a hard job.

That said, we believe that you would want to know of the continuing and increasing negative impact that the existing restrictions have on small businesses, such as those that comprise our association, almost all of which are “non-essential retail businesses” under your Executive Orders. A few have already been forced to make the decision to close permanently. Many others will face the end of the line in the not too distant future. Although you have recently permitted non-essential retail businesses to re-open on a limited basis, a continuing prohibition on customers entering the brick-and-mortar premises make it economically impossible for many of our members to continue. Many small businesses do not have the resources to facilitate curbside delivery of pre-ordered merchandise. Many of them are small boutiques that do not have websites or the capacity or resources to develop them and, most importantly, afford effective advertising to make the public aware of the option for curbside pickup at these businesses. In many instances, the anticipated profits to be made by re-opening limited to curbside pickup will be overcome by the associated employee and overhead expenses, and several small businesses owners do not have the resources to invest in re-opening on that basis and take the risk of further losses.

We also understand that you have been required to make decisions without precise and comprehensive information about the disease and the potential effects of the policies that you consider adopting. We understand that restrictions have been placed on us in the fog of war. We

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also are aware of what appear to be growing sentiments that the consequences of continuing the restrictions on business may very well be worse than the consequences of permitting them to open, albeit with social distancing requirements applicable to those essential businesses, such as box stores, to remain open throughout the crisis. I can assure you, however, that the members of our association have told me that they would be committed to policing their employees and customers in a manner consistent with those social distancing policies and other restrictions. We hope that you will see that many of our business owners feel that the identity of the product being sold should not determine a business's willingness and ability to adhere to the guidelines you have set forth for those businesses that are permitted to allow customers to enter their stores.

We appreciate your consideration of these thoughts and views as you make decisions moving forward. Basically, we are asking for a fair chance to rescue and save the businesses that comprise most of the Medford Business Association—and we are sure the bulk of the businesses in New Jersey that employ millions of its residents—from this crisis. We seek an opportunity to compete on a somewhat even, although still slanted, playing field with the mostly larger businesses that are currently permitted to open. Our position has the full support of Medford Township that is ready and able to begin assisting our citizens and business owners to move forward in a safe and responsible way.

I would be happy to provide you with further information should you so request.

Respectfully,

MEDFORD BUSINESS ASSOCIATION

BY:

Theresa Freedman  
President

cc: Honorable Charles Watson, Mayor, Medford Township