

Write In

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A Representative Not A Politician

PA 12th District US House of Representatives



Sept 6th, 2020

We Need Equality in Re-Opening Across Business Sectors

When considering the state of employment in the 12th District together with our top employment sectors and data on COVID19 risk, it is clear that the best thing for our labor force and for our economy would be further re-opening. The shutdown and the re-opening have thus far been riddled with inequity. We could re-open more fully by making the re-opening more equal across employment sectors. Here are some facts.

Unemployment in the 12th District

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics the unemployment rate in Pennsylvania rose from 4.7% in February 2020 to a high of 16.1% in April 2020. We have seen some recovery; as of July (the most recent numbers available) the statewide unemployment rate was 13.7% ranking Pennsylvania 47th on the list of 50 states plus D.C. and Puerto Rico! The states that rank below us at the bottom of the list include NJ, NV, NY and MA, all states hit hard by COVID19 shutdowns.

A look at the numbers by county shows broad disparity across the 12th District. Juniata County, where the top two employment sectors are manufacturing and food processing, the July unemployment rate was 9.5%. At the same time, counties as diverse as Lycoming, Northumberland, Potter, Sullivan and Tioga all had July unemployment rates over 13%. The top two employment sectors for each of these counties are restaurants, education and/or healthcare.

COVID19 Risk in the 12th District

We, of course, need to balance public health with economic considerations. Pennsylvania's State Government uses data from the Carnegie Mellon University's Risk-Based Decision Support Tool to help quantify the public health risk posed by COVID19 in different parts of the State. This tool breaks down risk by region and by county (though a few 12th District counties are notably absent) using factors that include COVID case risk (reported cases for the population of the area), commute risk (how likely are residents to bring COVID19 back from work in another area), ICU capacity risk (people over 60 vs availability of ICU beds), population density risk, population age risk (% of people over 60) and re-opening contact risk (% of workers employed in physically closed sectors). From the graphed data (updated 9/3/20) we can see that for most counties in the 12th District the risk from COVID19 is relatively low. (Lycoming, Northumberland, Union and Susquehanna Counties all have higher risk levels.)

Here are a few things we can do to bring equity to our re-opening while protecting public health and boosting our economy.

Bringing Equity to Re-Opening

- 1) Restaurants could be held to the same standards as school cafeterias and college dining services which were arbitrarily exempted from the more restrictive restaurant rules.
- 2) Non-religious events could be held to the same standard as religious events, which are preferentially (unconstitutionally) excluded from any restrictions.
- 3) Limitations that remain on gatherings could be based on the ability to social distance within the space rather than completely ignoring the size of the facility. Currently, "The limitation...is not based on occupancy of a particular square footage. It is only defined by the number of people congregated together for that event."(www.health.pa.gov/topics/disease/coronavirus/Pages/Guidance/Targeted-Mitigation-FAQ.aspx)



Scene from Child Abuse & Human Trafficking Forum Aug 30th Towanda, PA

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You can schedule a time to join us or just show up and participate in the discussion!

Share ideas for a discussion group or 1:1 conversation.

Send us materials about your program, service or idea related to healthcare to handout at the event. Materials can be sent to Liz Terwilliger for Congress, PO Box 83, Warren Center, PA 18851.

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