

To whom it may concern,

What part of our great state has been left unscathed in the wake of what is only the beginning of the Covid-19 crisis? Absolutely none. Who in this state has not been personally affected by loss of income, of work, of shuttering their small business, laying off workers from larger operations, able to work from home but with no childcare? The thousands of citizens who do not have health insurance? The people who are displaying all symptoms of having contracted the virus and not enough tests to go around? What of the elderly who are fearful of dying of coming into contact with an unknowing carrier? What of the single parents losing their jobs and children's schooling all in one fell swoop? What of the elderly without access to information to keep themselves safe, or lack safety nets of support to keep them healthy and quarantined? What of every restaurant or bar employee in the state suddenly being out of work and no idea when the next paycheck will come in?

I lost my job two days ago and have yet been able to log onto the Oregon unemployment application without causing the website to crash. I am a bartender at night and a vintage dealer during the day. I cannot go to work until who knows when, and my business, which relies on access to sourcing clothing in businesses which are now closed, has been taken out at the knees. Even if I am to continue to sell what inventory I had stored away, for how much longer will the post offices remain open? When essentials quickly fall to the wayside, how will us artists make our living? How will we pay the rent not only at the end of March, but of April, May, through the summer? How long will it take until every postal, bank, or grocery employee contracts Covid-19 and there is no one left to work the jobs at places of business that are left to keep the rest of us afloat?

The eviction moratorium on rentals is not enough.

Putting half the state on unemployment is not enough.

Shutting schools down for months is not enough.

How will our great state recover as we sink further and further into debt? How will we keep food on the table? Our utility bills paid? A roof over our heads?

I may only be 26 but I have clawed my way up from poverty growing up the daughter of a single mother with four kids, no high school diploma, putting herself through college working 2-4 jobs at a time.

And now I see a similar future stretching in front of me. All of my savings. All of my hard work and sacrifice and perseverance in the face of the trauma of poverty. Only to be kicked back with no end of the suffering in sight for me and thousands of other Oregonians.

I don't have all of the answers.

But I do have opinions.

I have experience enough over the length of my short life to have a thorough distrust of the federal government.

Where else is there to go to beg for help but our local and state government officials?

So here I am.

Put Oregonians first.

Help your people.

Our health may be our true wealth, but if we survive this, how will we build?

We the people ask for a helping hand.

This is so much larger than any of us are able to survive on our own. We must come together and do what is right for our most tired, poor and sick. We are only as free as the most vulnerable and underrepresented of our people's.

And right now, I am suffering. Your people are suffering.

A concerned and devastated Oregonian,

Elisabeth Kokesh