

**RACHEL PRUSAK**  
**STATE REPRESENTATIVE**  
**DISTRICT 37**



**HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

March 18, 2020

Co-chairs Roblan, Holvey and Members of the committee,

This week I hosted a call with local district leaders and elected officials to discuss what we are doing to support communities and listen to their concerns as this crisis continues. I heard loud and clear the need to focus on public health; access to food, shelter and housing; childcare; and economic challenges for workers and business owners. I wanted to share their perspective with the committee so local voices are heard.

Metro Councilor reported they have shut down all their venues and the staff was given the opportunity to work remotely if possible. Though they are taking these steps to protect the community, there is also interest in how they can be supportive of businesses, and how to best help vulnerable people losing their income/resources.

The County Commission reported concerns that our hospitals do not have enough PPE to handle the expected surge and they are looking for ways to be helpful. Housing is another concern, specifically housing unsheltered people. They are hoping the state will provide guidance and a robust proposal.

Mayors and City Counselors reported their towns have mostly shut down, meetings have been canceled, and staff has been given the opportunity to work remotely if possible. They shared their concerns with child care, resource management, and crucial communication on basic information. For example, one mayor pointed out how important it is that we make it known to communities that drinking water has not been impacted. Also, cities shared thoughts of how to best utilize healthy, low risk community members to possibly help our most vulnerable. One council member shared they are closing public bathrooms for health concerns and setting up portable restroom facilities. They also mentioned an interest in setting up more policies for eviction prevention and expanded telemedicine.

School Board members from Tigard-Tualatin and West Linn-Wilsonville school expressed the need to explore more online supplemental education material and the need to support distance learning while keeping in mind some students require additional assistance. Our schools are concerned with student mental health and looking for support in meeting our childcare needs. Also discussed was how our schools have become the primary resource for assisting our food-insecure community members. They are looking for more guidance on serving meals during non-student contact time (upcoming scheduled spring break) and hope we find ways to

increase the number of food sites available. On the local level The Tualatin Tigard School Board created PACKED WITH PRIDE, food delivery to Tigard Tualatin school district families in need which is sustained on local donations and volunteers.

To summarize the main concerns I've heard:

- Public Health
  - Adequate hospital bed numbers
  - Big concern around what we are doing about PPE numbers for anticipated surge. Currently people are making homemade PPE and sewing them.
  - Workforce
- Basic Needs
  - Food
  - Shelter
  - Childcare
  - Accessing Services
  - Education- specifically, what will school districts do to meet guidelines.
- Economic challenges
  - Helping business owners and workers
- Information
  - Getting accurate information to our communities

Our communities are doing their best to fill the gaps in serving our most vulnerable. I was happy to hear of all the hard work our local leaders are doing, and it is inspiring to see how many people are stepping up and working tirelessly to make sure we protect the most vulnerable members of our community. This, however, highlights that we as a state must do more. Today we are hearing from various industries focusing on the issues my community is concerned about: public health; access to food, shelter and housing; childcare; and economic challenges; and it is our job as elected officials to do what we can to protect and support Oregonians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rachel Prusak". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Representative Rachel Prusak