



City of Columbus

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Legislation Text

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As the City of Columbus works to manage and control the impact of the pandemic known as COVID-19, it is critical that we maintain our sense of community and kinship. This extends to all neighborhoods, all services, and all sectors of our economy, and it should be foremost in the minds of everyone as to how this pandemic is affecting those most at-risk.

In this time of crisis, Columbus City Council is proud of the leadership demonstrated by Mayor Andrew Ginther and Columbus Public Health Commission Dr. Mysheika Roberts. We hope that their leadership will serve as a template for the leaders of our business community, human services sector, and for all residents as we come together to endure this challenge.

To express support for the Mayor and the Health Commissioner during this current public health crisis, and to urge community leaders to take action necessary for the preservation of the health, welfare, and safety of Columbus residents.

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic will affect Columbus residents in manifold ways, many of which are far beyond their control but will have a potential long-lasting harmful impact; and

WHEREAS, it is within the ability of many civic and business leaders in the city to take steps that will mitigate the potential impact of the public health crisis; **now, therefore**,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF COLUMBUS:

That Columbus City Council supports the authority and emergency powers delegated to Columbus Public Health as defined in Chapter 775 of the Columbus Public Health Code, and further urges all residents to comply with and follow directives of the Commissioner of Columbus Public Health;

That in the interest of preserving public health, safety, and welfare, Columbus City Council expresses support for the Mayor should he invoke and utilize the emergency authority vested in his office as defined in Chapter 123 of Columbus City Codes;

That in consideration of the affordable housing and homelessness crisis which the city already faces, a situation that may be further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19, Columbus City Council urges all landlords to work with tenants who cannot pay rent due to employment disruptions and to utilize any emergency funds designated for housing stability;

That Columbus City Council commends Columbus City Schools for their immediate response in establishing food sites around the city, so that students receiving free and reduced meals at schools will not face hunger during an extended period of school closure;

That Columbus City Council commends the Columbus Foundation for the activation of its emergency fund in support of non-profit organizations, and to urge all community leaders, business partners, human services providers, and nonprofit organizations to work together and utilize their collective reach and resources to support Columbus residents during this challenging time; and that in recognition of the extraordinary strain that this emergency places on the city's homelessness programs, food pantries, and other critical support services, Columbus City Council urges our community leaders to direct additional resources to the aforementioned fund;

That Columbus City Council commends the Franklin County Municipal court for swiftly and decisively taking action for a moratorium on hearing eviction court cases for the next three weeks; Council urges the Franklin County Municipal Court to implement a similar moratorium on eviction filings in consideration of the affordable housing and homelessness crisis that may be further exacerbated by the impact of COVID-19; furthermore, Columbus City Council urges all landlords to work with tenants who cannot pay rent due to employment disruptions and to utilize any emergency funds designated for housing stability;

That for placing the well-being of their customers first, Columbus City Council commends the Department of Public Utilities, Columbia Gas of Ohio, and American Electric Power for their actions in halting utility shut-offs during this present public health emergency;

That to limit the ability to spread illnesses at places of business, Columbus City Council urges the United States Congress to enact emergency measures providing for paid leave time; but until such measures are approved, encourages generosity among its local employers with regard to paid time off; that employers are urged to implement or expand existing paid sick leave and paid caregiver leave policies, especially in consideration of those employees caring for older relatives that are especially vulnerable to the impact of this public health emergency; and that employers should utilize all measures at their disposal to afford non-essential employees the ability to telecommute;

That Columbus City Council urges commercial landlords to adjust rents and/or late fee grace periods for struggling small businesses, or to adjust payment schedules to amortize foregone monthly rents over an extended period once the current public health crisis has passed;

That Columbus City Council requests that the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services allow employees who experience a loss of hours and/or pay to qualify for unemployment benefits, and that any additional barriers are reduced to the fullest extent possible, such as wait periods and work search requirements;

That with respect to Police and Fire personnel that have been tasked with being on the front lines of this health crisis, Columbus City Council urges all residents to cooperate with emergency medical services and law enforcement agencies through the duration of this public health emergency.