



December 8, 2020

Dear Governor Newsom, State Senators, Assemblymembers and All California Elected Officials:

As leaders of organizations serving businesses of California, we are deeply concerned about State policies that are severely impacting our local businesses.

The entire business community, regardless of size, is suffering right now, unable to operate at full capacity. While we are fighting for all our members, we are especially concerned about our most vulnerable, **small businesses**. They are disproportionately harmed through the State's arbitrary mandates that unfairly discriminate against them. We are finding it difficult to both find proof of and understand the science and data guiding these decisions that claim that our small businesses are a threat to public health. There does not seem to be evidence that proves that small businesses cannot operate as effectively as their large counterparts can.

Our small businesses are integral in defining the character of our communities... the restaurants, breweries, wineries, retail boutiques and personal service providers. Your debilitating policies are direct attacks on the quality of life in each of our communities.

As our elected officials, we need to know why you are aligning with big business which unduly marginalizes and is swiftly eliminating our independently owned local businesses. It is unacceptable for our state government to choose winners and losers in our business community.

While we care about all small businesses, it is important to point out the disproportionate impact shutdowns have had on women-owned and minority-owned businesses. According to a recent report from Stanford Institute for Economic Policy Research, "The number of active business owners in the United States plummeted by 3.3 million or 22 percent over the crucial two-month window from February to April 2020.... African American businesses were hit especially hard experiencing a 41 percent drop. Latinx business owners fell by 32 percent, and Asian business owners dropped by 26 percent... Immigrant business owners experienced substantial losses of 36 percent. Female-owned businesses were also disproportionately hit by 25 percent."

As business leaders, we see firsthand the extraordinary efforts our small businesses have made to comply with the ever-changing state mandates. Many of our restaurants spent thousands of dollars preparing to efficiently and safely operate outdoors, only to be told to shut it all down.

The most recent "Stay at Home Orders" jeopardize the potential survival of even the most resilient small businesses. It is time for you, our elected leaders, to stop the favoritism toward big business and provide fair and equitable treatment to our small businesses.

Sincerely,

The following 81 chambers of commerce and business organizations representing business in California

