



# **House Republicans Demand Governor Call Legislature into Special Session to Collaborate on New COVID-19 Response Policy**

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ZOOM, IL— As the House and Senate chambers of the IL General Assembly sat empty on what was to be the first day of the 2020 fall veto session, a group of House Republicans urged Governor Pritzker to use his authority to call lawmakers to Springfield for collaborative work on the State’s next steps in battling COVID-19.

“The Governor may say he is disappointed in the cancellation of veto session, but it is fully within his power to call the legislature back in to session,” said State Representative Avery Bourne (R-Morrisonville). “The Governor cannot continue to unilaterally rule by executive authority. The legislature should be playing a critical role in the state’s response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Illinoisans need certainty on our plan- not a response that changes at the Governor’s discretion.”

Bourne went on to explain that House Republicans are looking for a balance between public health and Illinois' economic survival, and said a new shut down or further restrictions would force many small businesses to close their doors forever. Bourne also expressed worry about Illinoisans who will be thrown back into a state of unemployment while the Illinois Department of Employment Security remains completely ill equipped to handle their benefit claims.

State Rep. Dave Severin (R-Benton) is a small business owner in addition to being a legislator. He said the pressure on small businesses of all kinds is ramping up with increased mitigations taking effect.

“There's a negative chain of effect that happens when segments of the economy are shut down or severely hampered by regulations and mitigations. The closure of bars and restaurants for indoor service means job losses in more than just that industry,” Severin said. “In Southern Illinois, we rely heavily on Main Street businesses to provide jobs and livelihoods for our citizens. The big box stores are doing fine. We're here today speaking up for Main Street.”

State Representative Dan Caulkins (R-Decatur) agreed, and said his office is being flooded with calls and emails from business owners worried that increased restrictions or a new shut down order will force them out of business.

“The increased COVID-19 restrictions from Governor Pritzker continue to be made without legislative approval, and small businesses in my district are concerned about potentially being asked to shut down again,” said Caulkins. “His plan is killing Main Street Illinois. Governor Pritzker should call the legislature back to session so we can work together on a fair and reasonable plan to keep businesses open while maintaining the health and safety of everyone. He must stop making these decisions on his own.”