



March 18, 2020

Dear Friends,

A lot has changed in a short time.

Last week I'm not sure many people had heard the phrase 'social distancing.'
But today, it's the defining feature of our lives.

This week I was one of a handful of MPPs voting on the government's emergency COVID-19 legislation. Twenty-four of us were spread across the legislature to lessen the risk that the virus is spread. This is surreal.

The emergency legislation is a small piece of what is needed in the weeks and months ahead. But in unprecedented times like these, I believe we must put politics aside to keep people safe.

I have been impressed with the leadership shown by the Prime Minister and Premier, who have handled this emergency with calmness and clarity and who have begun to announce emergency measures.

We will need more relief and reassurance in the days and weeks to come.

I am thinking about the self-employed, freelancers and contract workers whose industries have ground to a halt.

I am thinking about people who are homeless or who have disabilities and could become more isolated and vulnerable over the coming months.

I am thinking about small business owners and non-profit leaders who aren't sure if they have the financial means to survive a prolonged closure.

I am thinking about remote First Nations without the healthcare resources to withstand a localized outbreak.

I am thinking about the mental health of our seniors in nursing homes who might go without visitors for weeks or months.

So I promise to be a voice for these groups, advocating for additional relief and resources that will help them get through this crisis.

I'm also writing to tell you that I am feeling what you are feeling.

Uncertainty as to what happens next.

Concern for the health of at-risk family members.

Anxiety about personal finances and the economy.

But I am also inspired by how our province is pulling together.

For every dreadful news headline, there is a heartwarming story about a neighbour delivering a note in the mailbox. Or a grocery store opening up early for seniors. Or a gin distiller making hand sanitizer for free.

While people are keeping their distance, they are finding new ways to pull together.

I want to thank you for listening to the advice of experts and staying home.

By doing so, you are potentially saving lives.

To the doctors, nurses, personal support workers, first responders and health care workers of all stripes working on the front-lines of this emergency, I thank you. **You are essential.**

To the transit drivers, shelter workers, grocery clerks, tradespeople, waste collectors, delivery drivers and so many more who cannot work from home and who are keeping our cities operating, I thank you.

At some point, we will get back to a new normal.

Until then, let's keep taking care of each other by picking up the phone, offering help, and practicing social distancing.

And remember to take care of yourself through whatever way is helpful, like breathing in the fresh outside air that sustains us.

We will get through this together.

Warm wishes,



Mike Schreiner

Leader

Green Party of Ontario