



Your State House Concord, New Hampshire



May 15, 2020

To my constituents in [Allenstown](#), [Epsom](#), & [Pittsfield](#):

Welcome back!

This week, my committee met electronically for a work session and executive session on the bills sent to us as a second committee. The work session concentrated on HB 1692, which creates a new license for wild mushroom foragers and sellers, complete with mandatory training, tests and fees, plus \$1000 fines for selling mushrooms without this permission – or for not keeping the mandatory records! I suspect it will pass, warts and all, because federal rules forbid restaurants to use wild mushrooms – or farmers' markets to sell them - unless collected by a licensed person. It's still in my committee, so I'm trying to think of an amendment.

HB 702, which requires supervised visitation centers to meet “guiding principles for safe havens” was briefly debated and passed, 17-3. I was opposed because the guiding principles will increase costs for new visitation centers, and the bill is totally unenforceable. The Merrimack County visitation center in Boscawen already meets these requirements, fortunately, so it won't be an immediate impact.

HB 1710, giving child care centers more time before inspection results are posted on the web, and HB 1712, improving the appeals process for child care centers, both passed unanimously, with minimal discussion. I had thought that HB 1712 was unnecessary, since we created a study committee on the process (HB 1711), but with the shutdown the committee chair thought it might be killed by the Senate just because they don't think we'll be able to reasonably study it this year.

The full House will meet in session next month, at UNH's hockey stadium rather than Concord, so that we'll have enough room to spread out. Representatives' Hall is packed tightly, and I guess many would not attend if we were to meet there so soon. The average representative is over 60, and many have underlying health issues, so there's some reason to be concerned.

I'm working to get the state reopened as soon as possible. With two more months of experience with this coronavirus, we've learned that it's really only dangerous to the old and feeble, or those with other contributing factors. Most young and healthy people recover, if they even notice they've been infected. And more than three quarters of the deaths in the state (and similar numbers elsewhere) are of people in long term care facilities – but we know how to prevent them! Almost 80% of the long term care facilities in the state have had no outbreaks and no deaths. So, we know what to do to protect our most vulnerable, and it'll be easier now that we have more test equipment and PPE.

Meanwhile, people are staying home. Many are unemployed, and the stress and isolation are likely to increase domestic violence, alcohol and drug abuse, and mental and social problems. I wouldn't be surprised if we find after a year or so that we lose more people to these than to the virus.

The problem with reopening is that a significant group of people are not convinced that they can survive being exposed to the virus. Some are reasonably concerned because they, or someone living with them, has health issues already, or they work with the fragile or susceptible. Others seem to me to be terrified without a real basis, and want to feel safe. However, once the virus is out - and it is out - we will have to live with it, somehow,



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sooner or later. We can't just stay at home forever
and let our society crumble.

Meanwhile, be well.



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