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MICHIGAN STATE SENATOR

**LANA THEIS**

22ND DISTRICT

Thursday, February 11, 2021

COMMITTEES:

INSURANCE AND BANKING, CHAIR  
EDUCATION AND CAREER READINESS, CHAIR  
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REGULATORY REFORM, VICE CHAIR  
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APPROPRIATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE ON K-12 AND  
MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Governor Gretchen Whitmer  
P.O. Box 30013  
Lansing, MI 48909

The Honorable Gov. Gretchen Whitmer,

I am writing you to respectfully request that state health officials, at your direction, reconsider the use of the CDC's Social Vulnerability Index that is being used to determine the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine in our communities.

As you know, the SVI is made up of numerous factors, such as whether or not you have a high school diploma, employment status, housing, and having a car, for example. Under normal circumstances, a county having a low SVI score could be considered a good thing. But, right now, in the midst of a global pandemic, the index is causing significant issues in Livingston and Washtenaw Counties.

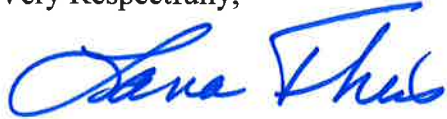
According to the SVI, Livingston County ranks dead last of all 83 counties in our state. Things are so bad that Livingston County has not even been able to fully vaccinate the 1A population, while other counties have moved on to the 1B group. There are about 41,000 residents currently eligible for the vaccine, with 32,000 who have expressed an interest in receiving the vaccination. However, because of the SVI, county health officials have only received 5,400 first doses and 1,300 second doses, which is not nearly adequate. Reviewing the statewide distribution thus far, it is clear that the number of doses received in Livingston County is grossly disproportionate when compared to other counties across the State based on the vaccine eligible population.

The State of Michigan did not use the SVI or other social factors when dealing with the H1N1 pandemic and instead relied on medical factors such as age and pregnancy status. These medical factors were associated with the medical vulnerability of a population for that disease. It is well known that those over the age of 65 and those with certain underlying medical conditions are at significantly increased risk for severe illness or death from COVID-19.

I am a scientist by trade, and if we follow the science, then we know that if we vaccinate people based on medical need, rather than by bureaucratic social determinants, we can help immunize the most vulnerable population first, achieve "herd immunity" more quickly and beat COVID-19 sooner.

To address this growing problem, and for the health and safety of all of us, I strongly urge you, governor, to immediately implement a more reasonable medical factor-based plan of vaccine distribution that allows the most medically vulnerable populations to be prioritized for vaccination.

Very Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Lana Theis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lana" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Theis".

Senator Lana Theis  
Michigan's 22<sup>nd</sup> District