

To whom it may concern:

I own a small boutique fitness studio in the Pearl District in Portland that just celebrated its 11th birthday, thankfully reopen. I employ 18 people and, at the beginning of the pandemic, had over 200 members. Like many other businesses, the pandemic has been a huge challenge and has had a huge negative impact on my business. Further, the mandatory shutdowns from the Governor's orders made it increasingly difficult to serve my community in a meaningful way and to be able to generate enough revenue to continue to pay my bills to keep my business open. I understand the need for the first shutdown when everything was halted; that made sense to me and I was happy to be part of a solution.

It was the way the second shutdown was handled that still baffles me and has been the most detrimental to my business. The rules were applied inconsistently so much so that I felt like my industry was being targeted specifically, without any scientific data to show justification for the shutdown. In addition, the way the second shutdown was communicated by the Governor had a deep, personal impact on me and my members. To say we're going from a "2 (or 4) week pause" to completely changing the rules and that 2 (or 4) weeks turning into three months was a huge blow. The other industries, like the personal services industry, that were allowed to stay open didn't make any sense. How was it possible that people could get a facial down the street from my business without a mask on, but couldn't work out 6 feet apart from each other with masks and no one touching each other? We proved that we could operate safely, and from June through November, my business had ZERO instances of COVID-19. So, I felt that my industry, and me personally as a business owner who depends on my business for my livelihood, was being unfairly targeted.

Lastly, the impact of the last shutdown has had a detrimental and deep impact on my members. Most of my members look to my business as a place to decompress, focus on themselves, and build their strength in a distraction-free zone. While we did what we could in a virtual environment, that doesn't replace the huge mental health, physical health, and social benefits of being in a group workout environment. Again, we proved that we could do it safely before from June through November, which made the second shutdown that much more impactful.

Thus, in light of this new potential legislation, I support limiting the types of restrictions the Governor may impose on certain businesses. It's clear that there needs to be a more consistent way of handling situations like this so that certain industries and individuals don't have to suffer.