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To: The Honorable Members of the House Oversight Committee
From: Amanda Fisher, State Director
Date: June 21, 2022
RE: Please support Bills that Restore Legislative Oversight

On behalf of small business owners in Michigan, we ask that you support House Bills 6184-6191, 6193-6199, 6202, 6204, 6206-6209, 6211-6214 that would give additional legislative oversight over government agencies in Michigan.

In 2020, even before the threat of Covid, we saw the governor wield executive authority by banning the sale of vaping products and essentially eliminating boards that were created statutorily through the legislature. We understand that swift action is often needed when addressing emergencies like Covid. Our form of government demands a separation of powers, accountability, and legislative input. However, until the 1945 Emergency Powers Act was struck down by the Michigan Supreme Court, the governor issued almost two hundred executive orders that were often arbitrary, conflicting, and difficult to implement for Michigan small business.

One of the consequences of this drastic use of emergency powers was that citizens, including small business owners, were left without a voice. Those elected to represent them in the House and Senate were essentially left powerless. And make no mistake, this is not new; unelected bureaucrats have been making unilateral decisions for years under both Democrats and Republicans, but never at this magnitude.

In addition to legislative oversight for emergencies, bills in this package allow for notification to the legislature when certain actions have been taken by a state agency. Many small business owners are not aware that their legislator can serve as their advocate when dealing with state departments. The bills requiring notification would help legislators better represent their constituents by allowing them to reach out to those who have been tagged by the department and help them figure out how best to proceed – whether it is to fix the problem or fight an unfair judgement.

These bills strike a fair balance between addressing emergencies and potentially dangerous situations, while allowing legislative input and oversight that will require the executive and legislative branches to work together for the people of Michigan.

Thank you for your support of these bills and of small business.