



Patrick Joyce

STATE SENATOR 40th SENATE DISTRICT

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May 8, 2020

Office of the Governor
207 State House
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker,

As a state senator, I believe it is my duty to my constituents to voice concerns with your decision to place Kankakee and Grundy Counties, largely rural areas with a few larger towns, in the same region as Chicago in your plan to reopen Illinois.

I do not question that densely populated areas like Chicago and its suburbs are facing more significant challenges from the coronavirus. I represent people in the suburbs, as well, and I'm deeply concerned about their physical, mental, and economic well-being. However, in less populated areas like Kankakee and Grundy Counties, the impact of COVID-19 is very different. For example, there are only 50 positive cases in Grundy County, which has a population of approximately 50,000 residents. There are 428 positive cases in Kankakee County, which has a population of approximately 110,000.

By placing Grundy and Kankakee Counties in the same region as the Chicago metropolitan area, you ensure that their reopening process is dramatically slowed compared to their geographically and demographically similar neighboring areas that were placed in different regions. This places Kankakee and Grundy Counties – especially their small businesses and their employees – at a disadvantage compared to other, similar areas of the state.

I urge you to reconsider how you have designated regions for your "Restore Illinois" plan. Kankakee and Grundy Counties are not normally considered part of the Chicago metropolitan area. People don't live in Grundy County and commute to Chicago every day. Kankakee is the center of its own metropolitan statistical area under the census.

Many believe that the criteria laid out in your five-phase plan can be achieved in Kankakee and Grundy Counties much sooner than in Cook County. I would invite you to give this area the opportunity to achieve that success.

I also represent a small part of Will County, and I would ask for your consideration in making Will County its own region or putting it in a region that also includes other collar counties. I also strongly believe that for the mental and financial health of our constituents that we should reopen any area as soon as it is safely possible. These large geographic regions make that more difficult. Like Kankakee and Grundy Counties, less than 1% of Will County's population is currently infected with the virus.

I understand the challenges you and your staff are facing and applaud your dedication and commitment to bringing Illinois through this difficult time. Now, I ask you to help the people of Kankakee and Grundy Counties by moving them to a region with geographically and demographically similar counties.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patrick J. Joyce". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patrick" being more prominent than the last name "Joyce".

Patrick J. Joyce
State Senate, 40th District