



May 18, 2020

Statement on Reopening the Commonwealth

Statement by Marie-Frances Rivera, president of the Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center (MassBudget), in response to the Governor's [Reopening Massachusetts](#) plan amid the COVID-19 pandemic:

The public health crisis created by the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) has created an unprecedented moment that requires an unprecedented response. The health and safety of our people must be the first and foremost consideration in when and how we re-open. As the Baker Administration suggests, we must make decisions, grounded in science, to save lives today and ensure the long-term economic health and collective well-being of our people.

It's clear that the economic and fiscal crisis triggered by COVID-19 has exacerbated the racial and economic inequities that have always existed in our system. **We must remember that [now is not the time for austerity](#).** Our government, by adequately funding health care, safety net supports, unemployment insurance, cash supports, and small business assistance, will help us all weather the health and economic crisis. To avoid cuts we need to ask profitable corporations and wealthy individuals to pay their fair share in taxes. This is the only way we can build an equitable and just recovery."

As we look at the Baker Administration's [Reopening Massachusetts plan](#), it's important to consider:

- **Do we have the resources to keep workers safe?** Moving through the phases described in the Governor's plan will require substantial additional public investment for PPE, cleaning supplies, in order to provide public education, transportation and countless other public services in a socially-distanced way.
- **How do we best support those out of work?** About 1,000,000 people [have filed](#) for [unemployment benefits](#) in the Commonwealth. Equitable direct cash assistance via the federal and state government will be needed to make sure we can get these dollars back into the hands of low and moderate-income people, regardless of immigration status.
- **What are the child care options available to working parents?** In reopening our economy, parents should not be forced to work when circumstances such as [lack of safe and affordable childcare](#) make it impossible. We must ensure that early education and child care providers are supported and in place.
- **How can we collectively support an equitable and just reopening?** As economists have [reported](#), cuts to the state budget are more harmful than tax increases during recessions. We need more resources to address this crisis including using our state's [Rainy Day Fund](#), [federal relief](#), and [homegrown revenue solutions](#).

In solidarity,

Marie-Frances Rivera
President
Massachusetts Budget and Policy Center