

March 18, 2021

The Honorable Steven Johnson
72nd District
Michigan House of Representatives

Dear Representative Johnson:

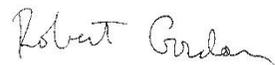
I am responding to your request that I appear before the House Oversight Committee.

My professional life has been dedicated to public service. From January 2019 to January 2021, I was grateful to serve Michigan and Governor Whitmer as Director of the Department of Health and Human Services. During the worst pandemic in a century, under Governor Whitmer's leadership, we stayed focused on doing the right things by acting quickly, following the science, and listening to medical experts. I appreciated Governor Whitmer's statement that "Robert Gordon and his team were an incredibly important part of our response, and I appreciated his service to our state." For the sake of greater transparency, the Governor's Office and I have agreed to waive the confidentiality provision in my separation agreement.

Extensive policy discussions are one reason that Michigan's pandemic response has been strong. Michigan's November 15 Pause to Save Lives, for example, was developed and then extended through days of deliberation. On occasion, there were robust conversations about policy issues where reasonable people could disagree and did. This was healthy: the stakes were life and death, and different people have different roles. Michigan was hit hard by COVID early, and initially had the third highest fatality rate in the nation. But different perspectives can produce strong outcomes. Michigan has fallen to 21st in deaths per capita.

The evidence is clear that Governor Whitmer's actions have saved thousands of lives. I was honored to play a part in that work. Governor Whitmer deserves a health director with whom she is comfortable. I tendered my resignation, and she accepted it. I am happy now to be a private citizen, see my family, and contribute to our country in new ways. I submit this letter in lieu of testimony.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robert Gordon".

Robert Gordon