



October 19, 2020

Mayor Treece & City Council
City of Columbia
Columbia, MO

Dear Mayor Treece and Members of the City Council,

The Columbia Chamber of Commerce highly values our partnership with the City of Columbia and the dedicated staff that have worked tirelessly to keep our community safe during this public health crisis. We believe that what Columbia and our business community has always done best, is what we do together. The response to COVID-19 should be no different – we should thrive together, hand in hand. We understand and support that bringing the rising number of positive student cases down and protecting the community at-large must be a continuous, combined public-private effort.

Accordingly, we should all take pride in the good faith effort that the Columbia business community has made to date. Our bars and restaurants in particular have far and wide followed all rules and ordinances imposed by the City Council and Health Department in response to COVID-19 – just as they would standard health codes and related inspections that they must pass to operate in ordinary times. This effort by the vast majority of our bars and restaurants demonstrates a mutual commitment and steadfast support to addressing COVID-19 concerns.

During this difficult time, in an effort of collaboration that has signified the symbiotic relationship between commerce and government, the Chamber respectfully requests three actions be taken by City Council and/or the Health Department: **1)** provide a framework for increasing the hours of operation for our bars and restaurants, **2)** halt “random” site inspections of bars and restaurants, returning to the practical complaint-based inspection system that effectively identifies bad actors while respecting and trusting local businesses to serve our community safely, and **3)** help our bars and restaurants help you and the community at-large by better communicating expectations and enforcing standards evenly throughout the City.

Once again, the business community, specifically our bars and restaurants in this case, have done their part to keep our community safe. We are now asking you to provide some modicum of relief to those businesses for their effort.

Respectfully,

Matt McCormick, IOM, CCE

President

Columbia Chamber of Commerce