

VERONICA ESCOBAR
16TH DISTRICT, TEXAS

FRESHMAN CO-REPRESENTATIVE TO LEADERSHIP

ASSISTANT WHIP

HOUSE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON MILITARY PERSONNEL
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HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

SUBCOMMITTEE ON THE CONSTITUTION,
CIVIL RIGHTS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

SUBCOMMITTEE ON IMMIGRATION
AND CITIZENSHIP



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1505 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4831

EL PASO OFFICE:
221 N. KANSAS STREET, SUITE 1500
EL PASO, TX 79901
(915) 541-1400

<http://escobar.house.gov>

April 30, 2020

Dear County Judge Samaniego and Mayor Margo:

I am deeply concerned about the increasing number of COVID-19 positive cases and deaths in our community, a concern that has been exacerbated by the Governor's decision not just to lift his state-wide order, but to usurp local control when it comes to health and safety regulations related to the global pandemic.

This morning I participated in a conversation with Dr. Anthony Fauci about the pandemic's disproportionate impact on minority communities. Dr. Fauci's assessment is that minority communities are as vulnerable as nursing homes because of the underlying health conditions and comorbidities Hispanic communities face along with socio-economic conditions like poverty. The combination of those factors, he explained, makes communities like ours more vulnerable to death and health complications related to COVID-19.

I shared my concern with Dr. Fauci that Texas is opening up tomorrow despite the fact that our testing rate is far below the recommended 40,000 tests per day and ranks near the bottom in per capita testing (at just above 1% of the population in Texas having been tested). In fact the largest day of testing in Texas was just over 20,200. Further, in El Paso, testing rates are also very low and our COVID-19 positive rates are increasing, along with increases in hospitalized and ICU patients.

Dr. Fauci's recommendation is that testing resources in communities like ours should be increased along with contact tracing, which is at the core of containing the epidemic.

He and I agree that the federal government has an obligation to provide support, and I will be in further communication with his office on this issue.

I wanted to share the information he provided on testing, his perspective that vulnerable communities should be provided the same resources as nursing homes and make myself available to assist in achieving this goal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Veronica Escobar".

Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress