



April 14, 2020

Members of the Ohio Municipal League,

The common good. Those three words have served as the guiding light for elected officials since the founding of our nation. The COVID-19 virus has caused us to take a hard look at what those three words mean for each of our communities. The fact is that hard, contentious decision-making has been required during the extraordinary times we are living in and our local leaders in Ohio have provided the steady hand at the wheel that these times call for.

In direct coordination with state and federal officials, Ohio's local leaders have been tasked with enforcing difficult social restrictions foreign to our normal way of life, such as preventing public assembly and imposing curfews. These are issues we never imagined having to institute and our local officials have made those difficult decisions that balance the rights of individuals with the needs of — you guessed it — the common good.

We know we will persevere in spite of the difficulties that we have been encountering over the last few weeks. Why? Because our country was built upon the strength of our local communities and the local institutions that built them. What we do in our cities and how we approach those responsibilities are just as important, if not more so, as the actions undertaken by our brethren at the federal and state levels.

Ohio's municipal officials have been thrust into a situation not of our making, but what has been required of us is clear: open and transparent leadership grounded in the common good. And that is the kind of leadership Ohio city and villages officials have provided, bringing clarity to the issues at hand and demonstrating a commitment to honesty and openness.

We have been heartened that our members have demonstrated an honest commitment to their residents and community employers, leading through the guidance provided by the pragmatic advice of state and local health experts. Local leaders have acknowledged the fears of those we serve by providing the type of leadership that empathizes, showing that we take their concerns and points of view seriously, emphasizing the needs of others and providing a sense of confidence that we will get through this crisis together.

Gov. DeWine and a number of his cabinet directors stay in constant contact with the OML and city leaders from across the state and his administration appreciates the leadership that has been demonstrated by our municipalities. He's consulted with mayors and city managers, finance directors and members of city council to stay aware of the situations he refers to as "on the ground". He has also provided trouble-shooting when the state can be of assistance to local needs like acquiring personal protective equipment or other resources. As in the past the Governor has said more than once that he is a believer in local control and that local officials are in the best position to make decisions for their communities and to be responsive to the needs of their constituents.

OML will continue to work with our state and federal officials and to provide cities with as much timely information and resources as possible. Please do not hesitate to contact us with your questions and concerns. We encourage you to stay in contact with officials in your county and other cities and villages as they can provide insight and possible solutions to the issues you face in your community.

This is a unique time in our nation's history. It is a time when we're being asked to make decisions we never thought we'd have to make in response to a crisis we never thought we would face. It is a time of faith and it is a time of leadership. Ohio municipal officials are answering that call and providing clear and responsible guidance in this confusing and unknown territory. The product of this challenge will strengthen our bonds and will reestablish the value of common good as communities work together to rebuild.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Scarrett', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kent Scarrett  
Executive Director