



89TH DISTRICT
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MICHIGAN HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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STATE REPRESENTATIVE

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It is the responsibility of all governing bodies, whether that be a township board or Congress, to make budget decisions that reduce costs and promote government efficiency. On August 21st, the Ottawa County Finance and Administration Committee proposed a budget reduction for the Department of Public Health that returns its funding to pre-COVID outbreak levels. Following this request, the Department launched a campaign on social media to misrepresent this proposed budget reduction and alleged that reduced funding will jeopardize the county's public health.

The misinformation surrounding this proposed budget cut does not illustrate the decisions facing the County. The COVID outbreak led to an outpouring of federal funds for public health departments and with this funding, the Department expanded its services and adopted a new norm for its operational funding. We are now three years past the initial COVID outbreak, and the County must address whether it can and should maintain this unprecedented funding for the Department.

The Department has claimed that the proposed budget cut will endanger public health and safety. This is an irresponsible mischaracterization of the fiscal decision facing the County. When government expands, it does not limit itself willingly. It takes accountability and transparency to determine where the budget and bureaucracy can be trimmed, and it takes a governing board that is willing to assess funding needs.

The funding levels established during the COVID outbreak are not sustainable. When the County draws on federal funding to subsidize its expanded operations, it sets itself up for turmoil when federal funding is no longer available. At a time when our state is faced by rampant inflation and economic uncertainty, making prudent decisions to reduce costs will best prepare Ottawa County for the future. Limited government requires limiting government and proposed spending cuts promote government efficiency.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Luke A. Meerman".

Luke Meerman
89th District