

I am Eric A. Combs, SMSgt, USAF(Ret) and I have been a citizen of Ohio since 1995. After retiring from the U.S. Air Force, I became a teacher with the Troops to Teachers program and after a few years was selected as the Ohio Teacher of the Year for 2006. Since then, I had become a school administrator and then struck out on my own as an education and security consultant. I work with several organizations and I am a 1099 consultant with the Center for Teacher Effectiveness. In that regard, I help teachers work with at-risk populations, engage students, and consult on school/church safety and security measure.

When COVID 19 hit, it closed schools, churches and everywhere that I regularly present, teach and coach. Like everyone else, I immediately tried to convert most of what I do to a virtual format and I have had a little success is training online.

My savings has dwindled considerably, as regular bills, loans and other financial obligations continued without abatement and I found myself and business quickly reaching a breaking point.

I have always been blessed to be able to work and to serve this great country where if you work hard, innovate, and serve the greater good, you can make a living. But when the government shuts everything down except for banks and larger corporations, it makes surviving as a small business nearly impossible.

I have great respect for our Governor, Lt. Governor and Dr. Amy Acton and would not want to have their jobs for the past few months. In hindsight, let me make a couple of suggestions:

1. If you shut down small businesses, consider also a plan to suspend major expenditures to banks and other financial institutions so the small business isn't buried so quickly.
2. There are a lot of businesses that MUST do work face to face or onsite, as an example, I come to facilities to do security assessments and program instruction. Please consider that these types service are also at risk of closing completely down if there is no support from the state.

My final issue I would like to bring up is the safety and security of my information when applying for any assistance or program with the state. I have never seen a news report about anyone who hacks into a database ever being caught or punished for such crimes. Why not develop technology not to just prevent, but catch and prosecute these people? I would really like to see more active responses to those who prey on the hard-working citizens of Ohio. It was very disheartening to see that after applying for unemployment assistance, the only feedback I received was that the company hired by the state may have exposed my private financial information and maybe even my social security number. Not what I was hoping for.

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