

(Originally published on April 21, 2020. Updates below)

To my constituents,

Re: How have I been serving you during the COVID-19 Crisis?

In early March, the House of Commons passed a motion to suspend Parliament given the COVID-19 crisis. Isolation measures were instituted, businesses have shuttered, air travel has slowed to a trickle, and more. The House of Commons has not had a regular sitting since that time. But even with all these challenges to how we conduct work, if there ever was a time to fight for our community, it is now.

I have been working hard on your behalf. As it's been several weeks since Parliament suspended, this document is designed to update you on what I have been working on, and how and where I have been doing so.

It's also designed to get your feedback on what is working, and what isn't. Since isolation measures mean I can't doorknock or attend community events, after reading this, I'd appreciate your feedback on anything I can do to better deliver service to our community and carry out my role as a Parliamentarian during these unprecedented times.

This document has the following sections:

- 1.) What I have been working on during the last several weeks?
 - a.) Providing Emergency Support Benefits / Advocating for Program Design Changes
 - b.) Developing a Plan to Safely Reopen the Economy
 - c.) Casework Support for Constituents
 - d.) Listening to and Informing our Community
 - e.) Holding the Government to Account
 - f.) Developing Policy to Protect and Serve Canadians
 - g.) Reviewing Legislation and Programs
 - h.) Raising National Awareness about Issues Facing our Community
 - i.) Working Across Levels of Government and Party Lines
- 2.) How I am Providing Services
- 3.) Where I am Providing Services
- 4.) Next Steps

While it is not an exhaustive list of all the work I've completed, it should give you a general sense of what I've been up to. You can send me your feedback on how I can best serve our community to Michelle.Rempel@parl.gc.ca.

My best,
Michelle

Updates for the Week Ending Friday, April 24, 2020

(Listed by section, and embedded into main document)

What I have been working on during the last several weeks?

B.) Developing a Plan to Safely Reopen the Economy

This week, I had the opportunity to push Liberal Minister Mary Ng on the need for a plan to safely relaunch the economy. The Minister could not answer basic questions about whether her government has a plan to relaunch the economy, while keeping Canadians safe. You can watch me question the Liberal Minister here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

I was also featured in an article about pressing the Minister on the timeline to reopen economy here:

<https://ipolitics.ca/2020/04/23/rempe-garner-presses-small-business-minister-on-timeline-to-reopen-economy/>

C.) Casework Support for Constituents

My office continues to receive significant amounts of personal individual inquiries on casework. Constituents can request for assistance from my office through submitting a form [here](#). A member of our staff will be in touch to discuss the issue and request any additional information that may be required in assisting you with your needs.

D.) Listening to and Informing our Community

I continue to regularly have phone calls with constituents in our community, as well as with organizations and non-for-profits who are looking for support in light of COVID-19. This week I held another virtual meeting with members of our local community associations as well.

I also have continued to use social media to keep our community informed of what the government is doing in light of COVID-19. Here is a snapshot of my last seven days on social media:

Facebook:

Posts: 7

Reach: 631,495

Engagements: 212,444

Views: 509,253

YouTube:

Posts: 3

Impressions: 118,700

Views: 24200

Hours watched: 1417

E.) Holding the Government to Account

This week, I questioned Liberal Minister Mary Ng at the Industry Committee. The Minister could not answer basic questions about whether her government has a plan to relaunch the economy,

while keeping Canadians safe. You can watch me question the Liberal Minister here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

I was also able to hold the Liberal government to account by forcing our Industry Committee to vote on having the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Hon. Navdeep Bains, appear before our committee and answer our tough questions. The Minister has not yet attended a meeting of our Industry Committee since the election. This is unacceptable. You can watch me get the committee to agree to have the Minister appear immediately here:

<https://www.facebook.com/126806667378661/videos/687924288683775/>

I was also featured in the following national news articles, which you can read here:

- Rempel Garner presses small business minister on timeline to reopen economy: <https://ipolitics.ca/2020/04/23/rempe-garner-presses-small-business-minister-on-timeline-to-reopen-economy/>
- Feds unwilling to offer guidance on reopening economy: <https://torontosun.com/news/national/feds-unwilling-to-offer-guidance-on-reopening-economy>
- Cities ask Liberals for up to \$15B in emergency funding to stave off COVID-19 budget crisis: <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/emergency-funding-needed-by-canadian-cities-federation-of-canadian-municipalities-1.5542697>
- 'A punch in the gut': 2020 Calgary Stampede cancelled due to COVID-19: <https://calgaryherald.com/news/calgary-stampede-to-give-update-on-2020-plans/>
- Article on offensive comments made by a leadership candidate: https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-derek-sloan-wont-be-the-next-conservative-leader-but-his-populist/?fbclid=IwAR10ST_CPIt2ZsRitcShXeQBVttV7AlvUgZB6z_51OM9_5SKXnrfXITugo8

I also issued the following press releases this week, holding the government to account:

- MP Rempel Garner Responds to Minister's Failure to Outline the Federal Government's Plan for the Future: <https://mprempe.ca/news/f/mp-rempe-garner-statement-april-24>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for federal support for the Stampede: <https://mprempe.ca/news/f/mp-rempe-garner-calls-for-federal-support-for-the-calgary-stampe>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Immediate Action on the Energy Sector: <https://mprempe.ca/news/f/mp-rempe-garner-calls-for-immediate-action-on-the-energy-sector>

F.) Developing Policy to Protect and Serve Canadians

I have issued the following press releases this week, calling on the government to act on needed policies for Canadians:

- MP Rempel Garner Responds to Minister's Failure to Outline the Federal Government's Plan for the Future: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-statement-april-24>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for federal support for the Stampede: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-federal-support-for-the-calgary-stampe>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Immediate Action on the Energy Sector: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-immediate-action-on-the-energy-sector>

G.) Review Legislation and Program Design

While this week there was no new legislation put forward to Parliament, I have continued to push the Liberal government for answers to a number of questions outstanding for Canadians. I had the opportunity to question the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade. During this questioning, the Minister could not answer basic questions as to whether or not the Liberal government is developing a plan to safely relaunch the economy. You can watch me question the Minister here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

I continue to hold regular meetings with advocacy groups, stakeholders, and industry experts on the challenges they are facing in light of COVID-19 and what needed changes the government should implement to address their concerns. I have also continued to work this week with the group of Conservative Members of Parliament that I am leading, regarding developing a holistic policy on better internet access for Canadians, including those in rural Canada.

H.) Raising National Awareness about Issues Facing our Community

This week a final decision was made that the Calgary Stampede will not be proceeding this year. I wrote an urgent letter to the Prime Minister on this, seeking support for the Stampede. You can read the letter here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-federal-support-for-the-calgary-stampe>

You can also watch my Youtube video on the Calgary Stampede decision here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYR1_kEQQMk

I also issued a press release, calling on the government to immediately act on the energy sector to support our community. In this release, I called on the government to immediately review and respond to a number of proposals and recommendations coming from provincial and federal leaders, industry stakeholders, and energy workers across the country. You can read my press release here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-immediate-action-on-the-energy-sector>

I was also featured in a number of local news stories this week, including on 660 News and in this article by the Calgary Herald on the Stampede:

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/calgary-stampede-to-give-update-on-2020-plans/>

1.) Working Across Levels of Government and Party Lines

This week I held additional meetings (via video/teleconference) with local city councillors and local MLAs to discuss the on-going work that is being done to support our community and outstanding concerns at all levels of government.

I also participated in the first virtual meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, alongside Members of Parliament from all political stripes, and asked the government and the Small Business Minister tough questions regarding a needed plan to relaunch the economy. You can watch me question the Liberal Minister here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

1.) What have I been working on during the last several weeks?

The COVID-19 crisis has brought unprecedented challenges to our community, compounding the economic issues we were already facing with the change in federal government policy towards the energy sector. In spite of physical distancing limitations during this time of great need, I have not shied away from the work for which I'm responsible.

I have worked hard to make sure my office remains open virtually and have provided easy access for you to receive support. I have assisted and advocated for many of you on a wide variety of individual case work, from anything to accessing the CERB, issues with Employment Insurance, small business support, and more.

In addition to this I have been busy writing policy, appearing on national media, writing press releases, getting changes to, and advocating for, emergency support programs. I also managed to get the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, which I serve as Vice Chair, to virtually convene to get work done, even though Parliament has been suspended.

I am making countless calls and holding virtual meetings with community groups, colleagues from different levels of government, civil society groups, industry leaders, and most importantly my constituents. I am regularly communicating with them via social media, email, phone and my website. I am hoping to host a virtual town hall in the coming days.

Below are some of the specific categories of items I have been working on.

A.) Providing Emergency Support Benefits / Advocating for Program Design Changes

When this pandemic first hit our country, many people in our community wrote to my office regarding the questions they had related to announced government benefits and other challenges in light of COVID-19.

I know that people are struggling in our community. I have heard this on the numerous phone calls, emails, social media messages and more that I have received in these challenging times. I heard many questions from constituents about whether they qualify for the CERB and various small business supports, what options are available for seniors and students; and how the government will respond to the energy crisis in Alberta.

Elected officials must take action to ensure that these questions are answered and that we advocate for needed changes to government policies and program designs to support our community. In light of these questions and concerns I have heard, I wrote multiple letters to both Minister Navdeep Bains and the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 regarding outstanding questions surrounding support for those affected by the situation and concerns related to industry.

- You can read one of my letters to Minister Bains here: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/letter-from-mp-rempel-garner-to-minister-bains>
- You can read my letter to the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 here: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-letter-to-the-covid-19-cabinet-committee>

In addition to these letters to various Ministers tasked with handling the COVID-19 response, I have also issued over **20 pages** worth of questions outstanding for the government at the end of March. This was extremely important, as many in our community were asking a number of questions regarding the government's plans on varying issues related to COVID-19. I am updating this document as I receive new questions, and to track any answers. I share this document with colleagues who have opportunities to question Ministers. This extensive list of questions can be viewed here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-qp-questions-on-covid-19>

I have also heard from many small businesses in our community. I know that small businesses are especially hurting in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Many of them are looking to the government for support, and unsure if they qualify or not for certain programs. This is why I issued an extensive 15 page backgrounder on support for small businesses, and a video guide on how to apply for support. You can read my backgrounder here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/support-for-small-businesses>

Many people have contacted my office looking for information on how to apply and get support from the government's programs related to COVID-19. To make things easier, I made two instructional videos for constituents in need of help on how to get small business support and how to apply for the CERB. The videos can be viewed here:

- How to apply for the CERB video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cQ-bOxXAJkA>
- Accessing small business support video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQNMJWq0PM4>

Thanks in part to my advocacy, our Conservative Opposition has also gotten the government to reverse course on some issues that I had been working hard on with regards to COVID-19. This includes the following:

- The discriminatory BDC loans policy, which at the beginning many small businesses in communities across the country were rightly concerned by the BDC's policy which planned to exclude certain businesses. Previously, the BDC's website noted that businesses that have been deemed ineligible to apply for COVID-19 related emergency assistance are those which are "inconsistent with generally accepted community standards of conduct and propriety." This exclusion included "bars, lounges, cabarets, casinos, discotheques, video arcades, pool and billiard halls, and similar operations." Our Conservative Party called on the government to reverse these discriminatory policies. In a recent interview, the President and CEO of the BDC reversed course and said that "any legal business is eligible to be part of the program." I called on the

government to take this action in my statement here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-liberal-government-to-act>

- After calling for action over the past 4 years, our Conservative opposition has finally gotten the Liberals to change their tone on the illegal border crossings from the US. As the former Shadow Minister of Immigration, I had been questioning the government on this for years and urging them to finally act on this. You can watch my video where I update Canadians on this change and show nearly 1 hour worth of footage of me pushing the government to change their policies here:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=utWYvNJ0OoM>
- The Liberals also backed down on their power grab attempt when we had Parliament sit earlier to approve measures to support Canadians in light of COVID-19. You can read my release on fighting hard against this attempted power grab here:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-is-fighting-hard-against-the-liberal-power-grab>

B.) Developing a Plan to Safely Reopen the Economy

Nearly a month ago, I recognized that the need to have a plan to safely reopen the economy would become an issue of dire importance to our community. I know that the cost to the community in light of COVID-19 and the high unemployment rates are unsustainable. That is why I put forward a plan to chart a path forward for Canadians. I released a significant document on my website regarding a needed plan to start to reopen the economy.

I have been working with a number of experts in this field to answer the question: How do we contain COVID-19 while we wait for a vaccine, herd immunity, and treatments to be developed; achieved and widely deployed, while keeping the economy afloat? It is absolutely vital that the government have a plan to safely reopen the economy.

I also began to advocate for a Committee within my political party to address the issues of charting a path forward for Canadians. I am very pleased that this Committee has been struck and I will be participating in these discussions with my colleagues to put forward concrete measures to relaunch our economy. We need to safely get Canadians back to work and the government must put forward a strategy on this.

I also hosted a number of caucus meetings with colleagues in my party to hear various concerns and potential solutions to the challenges facing Canadians from coast-to-coast-to-coast. These meetings have been very productive and allowed me to develop policy measures for which our Conservative party can advocate.

You can read my document on charting a path forward and reopening the economy here:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/covid-19-and-the-economy-charting-a-path-forward>

I recently had the opportunity to push Liberal Minister Mary Ng on the need for a plan to safely relaunch the economy. The Minister could not answer basic questions about whether her

government has a plan to relaunch the economy, while keeping Canadians safe. You can watch me question the Liberal Minister here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

I was also featured in an article about pressing the Minister on the timeline to reopen economy here:

<https://ipolitics.ca/2020/04/23/rempe-garner-presses-small-business-minister-on-timeline-to-reopen-economy/>

C.) Casework Support for Constituents

Keeping my office available to provide individual help when requested during this time of uncertainty is one of my top priorities. Many constituents have contacted my office with a variety of personal individual queries, from accessing various federal government financial programs to helping stranded loved ones who needed to be brought safely back to Canada.

My office manages issues related to working with constituents by liaising with federal agencies including, but not limited to, CRA, ESDC, Global Affairs and IRCC to provide problem resolution services for individual constituents. For instance, should my office discover an administrative oversight, we take action to escalate their concern. Should my office find a policy gap, we actively advocate for policy change on this front.

This work has not ceased since the start of COVID-19, but has understandably dramatically increased. In the last several weeks, my office has assisted with nearly a hundred individual complex constituent cases.

As the government gradually announces financial support programs during COVID-19, my office has applied these changes to our individual problem resolution work. I have also made sure that my office has remained accessible for constituents through the addition of text messaging and the ability to reach staff via cell phone to our contact methods.

As individual concerns have been brought to my attention, I have been able to advocate for increasing the range in eligibility for various federal financial programs, such as the Canada Emergency Response Benefit. To advocate for my constituents, I wrote a letter to the COVID-19 Cabinet Committee asking numerous questions about the federal government support programs to make sure that those in my constituency would not be left vulnerable and without support in their greatest time of need. Many of the changes I have advocated for have been made and are now helping members of our community.

I will continue to respond to requests for help from constituents in their time of need, and will advocate for policy changes affecting their individual lives.

Constituents can request for assistance from my office through submitting a form [here](#). A member of our staff will be in touch to discuss the issue and request any additional information that may be required in assisting you with your needs.

D.) Listening to and Informing our Community

Listening to and informing our community during these unprecedented times remains a top priority for me. I have proactively been working closely with community leaders, business owners and residents since the onset of COVID-19 to ensure your voices continue to be heard.

During this pandemic, I have maintained a close working relationship with community stakeholders. I have held virtual meetings with Community Association representatives to hear their concerns and help provide resources. My team has also attended virtual Community Associations meetings, ensuring a consistent line of communication. I have been proactively reaching out to other leadership groups in our community; business leaders, civil society representatives, leaders from the faith community, and ethnic community groups to better understand the precise challenges our community is facing during this time and to work on solutions. These meetings have directly resulted in program changes to better serve our community.

In addition to engaging with these community stakeholders, I have been proactively reaching out to hear directly from constituents. Many of you have been calling and writing into my office with questions on federal announcements and I have been taking these questions to the government and ensuring your comments are feeding into the policy solutions I bring forward. I have been addressing all of the questions from community members on my website, where I have collated resources from all levels of government, posted all my press releases, provided step-by-step tutorials on applying for financial support, and post the updated answers that I have received from the government. My website is updated daily with new information from government press briefings. In addition to policy concerns, my office has been hearing from businesses that are struggling and feel neglected by the federal government. To address these concerns and better advocate for small businesses I have been having phone calls with business leaders regularly, and I am currently planning a virtual roundtable for business owners in Calgary Nose Hill, as well as a virtual town hall for constituents in general. I also recently held another virtual meeting with members of our local community associations as well.

Since the beginning of the pandemic response, I have remained active on social media to regularly inform constituents about information that is important for them to know. This includes orders from governments that have resulted in disruption to services and daily life; and about my efforts to advocate on their behalf while holding the government accountable for its decisions.

Since mid-March I have released 18 videos on Facebook, which have reached **5,333,200** Canadians. These videos have covered topics ranging from government orders, available resources, my response to the crisis in the energy sector, and updates on my activities. I have also posted six additional messages to Facebook with links to helpful resources and materials that I have compiled for my community. These additional posts have reached 345,300 Canadians. Over the same time period, I have received several thousand Facebook inbox

messages. My staff and I work quickly to sort through these messages in order to eliminate spam and to date have been able to respond to 94% of these messages.

I have also made use of YouTube to keep my community informed about the pandemic and the work I am doing as the Member of Parliament. Since mid-March, when governments began imposing COVID-19 response measures, I have communicated 18 times with my community via YouTube. These videos have been viewed **149,061** times and have allowed me to directly engage with constituents who have had questions about their individual circumstances.

My community has also remained informed about my efforts via email. In the last few weeks I have sent out weekly email updates, which reach tens of thousands of people. These emails have also generated hundreds of follow up replies with questions about government programs and the current pandemic measures. My staff and I have worked diligently to reply to people in a timely fashion as we answer their questions and help assist them with their circumstances.

E.) Holding the Government to Account

It is vital that Parliamentarians continue to hold the government to account on the policies and proposals they put forward in order to better the measures that will be used to help Canadians. This is why I have issued a number of press releases calling on the government to act and holding them to account on their decisions. You can read my press releases here:

- MP Rempel Garner Responds to News of WestJet Layoffs:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-responds-to-news-of-westjet-layoffs>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Oversight of Cell Phone Tracking (the Privacy Commissioner has recently echoed this concerns, calling for the use of a privacy framework):
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-oversight-of-cell-phone-tracking>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for Action on BDC Loans (recently this policy has been reversed, due to our opposition pushing the government to make a change):
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-liberal-government-to-act>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for Liberal Government to Act on Scammers:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-liberal-government-to-act-on-scammers>
- MP Rempel Garner responds to the Alberta energy crisis:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-responds-to-the-alberta-energy-crisis>
- MP Rempel Garner is fighting hard against the Liberal power grab:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-is-fighting-hard-against-the-liberal-power-grab>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Action to Ensure Rural Connectivity:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-action-to-ensure-rural-connectivity>

- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Action to Safeguard Internet Access: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-action-to-safeguard-internet-access>
- MP Rempel Garner's Statement on Industry Committee Reconvening: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-statement-on-industry-committee-reconvening>
- MP Rempel Garner Continues to Call for Privacy Oversight: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-continues-to-call-for-privacy-oversight>
- MP Rempel Garner Responds to Minister's Failure to Outline the Federal Government's Plan for the Future: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-statement-april-24>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for federal support for the Stampede: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-federal-support-for-the-calgary-stampe>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Immediate Action on the Energy Sector: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-immediate-action-on-the-energy-sector>

I also recently filmed a video with our Conservative Party Whip, MP Mark Strahl, on what can be done to keep Justin Trudeau and his government in check. You can watch that video here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hJnkfaZotbY>

I have also participated in a virtual meeting of the Standing Committee on Health to ask tough questions about the government's response to COVID-19. At this meeting I had the chance to question the industry department on a number of issues that are important to our community, including restarting the economy and cell phone tracking data. You can watch me question the official here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORZBbmrqSTU>

I recently questioned Liberal Minister Mary Ng at the Industry Committee. The Minister could not answer basic questions about whether her government has a plan to relaunch the economy, while keeping Canadians safe. You can watch me question the Liberal Minister here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

I was also able to hold the Liberal government to account by forcing our Industry Committee to vote on having the Minister of Innovation, Science and Industry, Hon. Navdeep Bains, appear before our committee and answer our tough questions. The Minister has not yet attended a meeting of our Industry Committee since the election. This is unacceptable. You can watch me get the committee to agree to have the Minister appear immediately here: <https://www.facebook.com/126806667378661/videos/687924288683775/>

I have also been featured in a number of national news articles regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and holding the government to account on their decisions. You can read some of these articles here:

- Article on the challenges facing Alberta in light of COVID-19:
<https://www.hilltimes.com/2020/03/23/its-incredibly-dire-here-alberta-mps-navigating-covid-19-and-oil-crises/240291>
- Article on ticket refunds and protecting consumers:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/business/calls-for-live-nation-ticketmaster-investigations-1.5537077>
- Article on the need to protect Canadians from scammers preying on people in light of COVID-19:
<https://calgarysun.com/news/scammers-preying-on-peoples-vulnerability-during-covid-19-pandemic/wcm/5c1981b6-ae0-41a5-94c7-6622cbd99a07>
- Article on the Liberal government's attempted powergrab:
<https://www.toronto.com/news-story/9914546-liberals-promise-changes-to-sweeping-tax-and-spend-legislation-that-angered-opposition-mps/>
- Article on safety concerns at Service Canada locations:
<https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-ottawa-considers-shutting-down-service-canada-centres-as-employees/>
- Article on concerns related to over-policing during the pandemic:
<https://ipolitics.ca/2020/04/17/civil-rights-advocates-caution-against-over-policing-during-pandemic/>
- Interview by Chris Hall on The House regarding fulfilling the role as an MP in light of COVID-19 and the work I am doing during the pandemic:
https://16523.mc.tritondigital.com/CBC_THE_HOUSE_FROM_CBC_RADIO_P/media-session/6bfdbab1-0f0f-43ac-947b-cc19ca7930ff/thehouse-hNG9HrMn-20200410.mp3
- Rempel Garner presses small business minister on timeline to reopen economy:
<https://ipolitics.ca/2020/04/23/rempe-garner-presses-small-business-minister-on-timeline-to-reopen-economy/>
- Feds unwilling to offer guidance on reopening economy:
<https://torontosun.com/news/national/feds-unwilling-to-offer-guidance-on-reopening-economy>
- Cities ask Liberals for up to \$15B in emergency funding to stave off COVID-19 budget crisis:
<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/emergency-funding-needed-by-canadian-cities-federation-of-canadian-municipalities-1.5542697>
- 'A punch in the gut': 2020 Calgary Stampede cancelled due to COVID-19:
<https://calgaryherald.com/news/calgary-stampede-to-give-update-on-2020-plans/>
- Article on offensive comments made by a leadership candidate:
https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-derek-sloan-wont-be-the-next-conservative-leader-but-his-populist/?fbclid=IwAR10ST_CPIt2ZsRitcShXeQBVttV7AlvUgZB6z_51OM9_5SKXnrfXITugo8

I also felt that the government had not answered all of the outstanding questions I had been hearing from our community and businesses that have been deeply affected by the pandemic. This is why I issued over **20 pages** worth of questions outstanding for the government at the

end of March. This extensive list of questions can be viewed here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-qp-questions-on-covid-19>

One of my Parliamentary roles is Vice-Chair of the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology. As such, I have been working with my counterparts on the Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology, to push the Liberal government to allow our Committee to sit so that we can demand transparency regarding the government's response to COVID-19 and propose multi partisan solutions. There is no reason that Committees, particularly as ours is the *Industry, Science and Technology Committee*, cannot try and have regular meetings virtually and continue to work. After pushing the Liberal government on this, we finally got them to agree to start meeting virtually.

You can read my letter to the Chair of the Industry Committee here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-letter-to-the-chair-of-the-industry-committee>

You can also read my statement which I released after we won the fight to get our Committee to virtually meet here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-statement-on-industry-committee-reconvening>

I have been a vocal advocate to ensure that Parliament continues to have mechanisms to hold the government to account while maintaining social distancing guidelines. There are big questions for Parliament to hold the government to account for, including how the economy will be restarted while preventing the spread of COVID-19. As fully functional virtual sittings may not be possible due to the House of Commons Standing Orders and technological limitations, I have supported proposed hybrid plans that allow Parliamentary committees to virtually sit but also accommodate in person, reduced quorum accountability sessions that respect distancing measures.

A team Canada approach includes holding the government to account. I will continue to advocate for our community and hold the government to account on their policies and decisions in the midst of this pandemic.

F.) Developing Policy to Protect and Serve Canadians

It is important that Members of Parliament propose and develop policy on issues that are facing Canadians in light of COVID-19. I believe that big and bold policy initiatives are needed to help us overcome this challenge. As your Member of Parliament and the Conservative Shadow Minister for Industry and Economic Development, I have been putting forward a number of policies that will help Canadians and our community overcome this pandemic.

I have issued a number of news releases calling on the government to take needed action on some of the following issues. You can read these releases here:

- MP Rempel Garner Responds to News of WestJet Layoffs:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-responds-to-news-of-westjet-layoffs>

- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Oversight of Cell Phone Tracking: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-oversight-of-cell-phone-tracking>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for Action on BDC Loans (recently this policy has been reversed, due to our opposition pushing the government to make a change): <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-liberal-government-to-act>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for Liberal Government to Act on Scammers: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-liberal-government-to-act-on-scammers>
- MP Rempel Garner responds to the Alberta energy crisis: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-responds-to-the-alberta-energy-crisis>
- MP Rempel Garner is fighting hard against the Liberal power grab: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-is-fighting-hard-against-the-liberal-power-grab>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Action to Ensure Rural Connectivity: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-action-to-ensure-rural-connectivity>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Action to Safeguard Internet Access: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-action-to-safeguard-internet-access>
- MP Rempel Garner's Statement on Industry Committee Reconvening: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-statement-on-industry-committee-reconvening>
- MP Rempel Garner Continues to Call for Privacy Oversight: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-continues-to-call-for-privacy-oversight>
- MP Rempel Garner Responds to Minister's Failure to Outline the Federal Government's Plan for the Future: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-statement-april-24>
- MP Rempel Garner calls for federal support for the Stampede: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-federal-support-for-the-calgary-stampede>
- MP Rempel Garner Calls for Immediate Action on the Energy Sector: <https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-immediate-action-on-the-energy-sector>

I have also worked with my colleague, Conservative MP Brad Redekopp, on his initiative to push the government to set guidelines on personal protective equipment (PPE) for industry so that we can eventually begin to safely reopen the economy. He issued a press release with a quote from me, pushing for this needed action. You can read his press release here:

<https://www.facebook.com/BradRedekoppMP/posts/2521504581512781>

I am also leading a group of parliamentarians from my party to find solutions to the issue of rural broadband in Canada. This is a deeply concerning issue that highlights the inequality of access in our country and is only exacerbated by the COVID-19 situation where many are now working from home. Conservatives know that we need to propose solutions to ensure that Canadians

have access to fast and reliable internet. You can read my statement on the need to ensure rural Canadians have network access here:

<https://mprempe.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-action-to-ensure-rural-connectivity>

I will continue to put forward bold and innovative policies to tackle the issues facing our community and Canadians more broadly, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition to the policies I have been advocating for in press releases, media interviews and with my Conservative colleagues, I have also begun to chart a path forward for Canadians. You can read my document regarding relaunching the economy here:

<https://mprempe.ca/news/f/covid-19-and-the-economy-charting-a-path-forward>

G.) Review Legislation and Program Design

When the government announced the measures it would be presenting in the House of Commons, I ensured my due diligence as your representative was undertaken and reviewed the bills being put forward. Even though I would not be attending the House of Commons brief emergency sessions, as only a few pre-selected Members of Parliament would be going to represent our Conservative Party, I rigorously reviewed the bills and program designs being presented and provided feedback to colleagues who would be physically debating the bill as well as to my Party's leadership team.

Following the announcement of the first bill to be passed in Parliament, I quickly voiced concern at the Liberal's attempted power grab. You can watch my video on this here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eArqzBSYd_o

Luckily, we were able to get the Liberal government to back down on this egregious move and were able to secure other concessions. You can watch my update video on this here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq6TcGDehlg>

I have continued to push the Liberal government for answers to a number of questions outstanding for Canadians. I had the opportunity to question the Minister of Small Business, Export Promotion and International Trade. During this questioning, the Minister could not answer basic questions as to whether or not the Liberal government is developing a plan to safely relaunch the economy. You can watch me question the Minister here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

I continue to hold regular meetings with advocacy groups, stakeholders, and industry experts on the challenges they are facing in light of COVID-19 and what needed changes the government should implement to address their concerns. I have also continued to work this week with the group of Conservative Members of Parliament that I am leading, regarding developing a holistic policy on better internet access for Canadians, including those in rural Canada.

H.) Raising National Awareness about Issues Facing our Community

I am proud to advocate for our community and elevate our concerns into the national conversation. Our community is suffering a jobs crisis that existed before the global pandemic. As your representative, I have used every tool available to demand action and propose solutions.

One of the tools I use to accomplish this is the national media. You can read my comments about the crisis facing Alberta workers in the energy sector in light of COVID-19 here:

- <https://www.hilltimes.com/2020/03/23/its-incredibly-dire-here-alberta-mps-navigating-covid-19-and-oil-crises/240291>.

You can also read my statement on the energy sector crisis that I released here:

- MP Rempel Garner responds to the Alberta energy crisis:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-responds-to-the-alberta-energy-crisis>

You can read about my advocacy work on safety concerns at Service Canada locations here:

- <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-ottawa-considers-shutting-down-service-canada-centres-as-employees/>

Another tool I am able to use to advance the issues of my community is social media. Informing Canadians across the country about the issues we face in Alberta allows them to pressure their elected representatives for action. Recent videos I have posted about the jobs crisis in Alberta and collapsing energy prices have reached over **210,000** Canadians.

I am also proud of the work I have done to assist local employers in my community. As the federal government announced support measures I was listening to the needs of employers in every sector of my community. I put pressure on the government to amend these programs and support measures in order to more effectively help them in the midst of this crisis. You can read some of my statements as a part of these efforts here:

- MP Rempel Garner calls for Action on BDC Loans (recently this policy has been reversed, due to our opposition pushing the government to make a change):
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-liberal-government-to-act>
- MP Rempel Garner Responds to News of WestJet Layoffs:
<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-responds-to-news-of-westjet-layoffs>

Recently, a final decision was made that the Calgary Stampede will not be proceeding this year. I wrote an urgent letter to the Prime Minister on this, seeking support for the Stampede. You can read the letter here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-federal-support-for-the-calgary-stampe>

You can also watch my Youtube video on the Calgary Stampede decision here:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYR1_KEQQMk

I also issued a press release, calling on the government to immediately act on the energy sector to support our community. In this release, I called on the government to immediately review and

respond to a number of proposals and recommendations coming from provincial and federal leaders, industry stakeholders, and energy workers across the country. You can read my press release here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garner-calls-for-immediate-action-on-the-energy-sector>

I was also featured in a number of local news stories recently, including on 660 News and in this article by the Calgary Herald on the Stampede:

<https://calgaryherald.com/news/calgary-stampede-to-give-update-on-2020-plans/>

1.) Working Across Levels of Government and Party Lines

It is important that politicians across all levels of government work together to ensure that the needs of our community are met. This is why I have been regularly having phone and video calls with our local city councillors in our community and our local MLAs. In these meetings, we have been sharing concerns and addressing ways that we can work together to ensure that our community is properly supported in this pandemic. I have also been taking many virtual meetings with experts and stakeholders pertaining to my role as the Conservative Shadow Minister for Industry and Economy Development. This includes meeting with businesses, organizations, civil society groups, not-for-profits and field experts on a number of issues every day to develop policy to help Canadians and our industries in the midst of this pandemic.

I have been working across party lines to ensure that our basic functions of parliament can continue to take place despite the COVID-19 realities. As such, I have been working with my counterparts on the Standing Committee on Industry, Science, and Technology, to push the Liberal government to allow our Committee to sit so that we can demand transparency regarding the government's response to COVID-19. There is no reason that Committees, particularly ours as it is the Industry, Science and Technology Committee, cannot try and have regular meetings virtually and continue to work. After pushing the Liberal government on this, we finally got them to agree to start meeting virtually. It is my hope that the committee can quickly provide real solutions to the crisis Canada is currently in.

You can read my letter to the Chair of the Industry Committee here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-letter-to-the-chair-of-the-industry-committee>

You can also read my statement which I released after we won the fight to get our Committee to virtually meet here:

<https://mprempel.ca/news/f/mp-rempel-garners-statement-on-industry-committee-reconvening>

I recently also participated in the first virtual meeting of the Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, alongside Members of Parliament from all political stripes, and asked the government and the Small Business Minister tough questions regarding a needed plan to relaunch the economy. You can watch me question the Liberal Minister

here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fqFXWxdP_gQ&t=20s

2.) How I am Providing Services

Given that my work functions both in Calgary and Ottawa, I have always run a paperless office and employed video conferencing technology to stay in touch with constituents and to enable my staff to work as a cohesive unit. As such, it has been a relative seamless transition to working virtually to provide support to our community.

My team meets several times a day via videoconference and we employ other remote work from home technology to enable rapid response to issues. I also have built significant reach across social media platforms, and contact details for many of you which has enabled me to have two-way communication in this time of crisis. I also have an app that I use to provide information to those who subscribe to it.

Our office phones are being answered, emails responded to, and meetings are happening via videoconference and teleconference. Please reach out as we have been and continue to be fully operational.

Given that the House of Commons printing services isn't currently operating, I have not been able to send out regular paper-based communications, which many people in our riding who do not regularly use the internet rely upon. The House of Commons administration is working on solutions to this issue and should have an alternative strategy to provide this service in coming days. I have also been working with our community associations to find ways to reach members of our community that are similarly isolated.

My website contains resources for new Canadians whose first language is not English or French, in order to ensure they are not unduly isolated from services or information. An important part of my community outreach has been identifying groups of people who are isolated or otherwise marginalized and unable to access services and then trying to find creative ways to respond to their needs.

Town hall meetings have always been an important part of my constituency work and I am working to continue this even under current isolation guidelines. I also have been working on holding a town hall meeting videoconference / teleconference, and expect to have this ready to go by next week. Once I have this capacity in place, I plan to regularly hold these meetings to augment my communication that is currently happening over other platforms.

3.) Where I am Providing Services

As events related to the COVID-19 crisis quickly unfolded, I was in constant contact with my Party Whip. It was made clear to me that a full contingent of MPs would not be returning to Ottawa any time soon, and that all MPs would be required to conduct most of their duties from a remote location. It was suggested that I not travel but instead self-isolate as millions of

Canadians are doing, monitor the situation given how rapidly it was changing, and continue my work virtually.

I was also advised that all MPs, regardless of party affiliation or personal circumstance were being given the same advice. Only certain Members of Parliament have been selected by their parties to enter the House for any given in-person session, with most parties primarily relying on Members who live within driving range of Ottawa to maintain quorum. I thank my colleagues of all political stripes who are providing this vital service to our democracy as travel restrictions have made it difficult for those representing more remote ridings to travel.

Thus, as most other MPs have done, I am sheltering in place with my family, reevaluating the situation on a daily basis, and continue with my duties remotely, given that there are no physical events in either Calgary or Ottawa that I can regularly attend due to COVID-19 isolation guidelines, and party mandates on MP attendance.

On a personal note about my family circumstance, I am newly married to a recently retired US Army veteran. My step-children and their mother live in Jeff's state of Oklahoma. Because my life and work is firmly in our community, travel responsibilities primarily fall to my husband Jeff, with him dividing his time between me in Canada and our children in the US. With neither of us being a stranger to work related absences - Jeff's deployment experience and my experience travelling between Calgary and Ottawa as an MP - this situation has worked for us to date.

However, I was attending to an unexpected and urgent private personal matter with my family in the United States prior to COVID-19 travel restrictions being imposed. I am in daily contact with my Party Whip and members of our community about next steps. I stand ready to immediately physically return when advised that a) Parliament is to resume full in person sittings or my party Whip advises me to attend a reduced quorum sitting, b) I can safely resume in person meetings and in person outreach in the riding, or c) I cannot continue my duties from my current location or it becomes apparent that I could better serve my constituents elsewhere. My family understands that our specific circumstance means that when this happens, we likely won't see each other for an extended period of time, but we also understand the nature of my responsibilities.

I have been observing Alberta's self-isolation standards. As many MPs are subject to 14-day domestic interprovincial travel quarantines, my daily review of this scenario also accounts for the necessary 14-day quarantine upon return, for which I have fully compliant plans in place.

4.) Next Steps

I am thankful for all the front line essential services workers who have taken great personal sacrifice during this time of crisis. My commitment to you, and to them, is to keep working hard to ensure we have a pathway out of this crisis.

As every Canadian who has been sheltering in place can relate, I miss the simple taken-for-granted joy of being out and about in our community and in person interactions with each of you. I want to safely return to that way of life as soon as possible, and get our community back to work. This is why I'm working hard to build a plan to get our community back to work while stopping the spread of COVID-19.

As other MPs will be doing with their families within their own self-isolation scenarios, I intend on attending virtual Parliamentary sessions and committees that are held. I have already taken part in the virtual Health Committee. I am ready to return to Ottawa once I have been advised to do so by my Party Whip. I will continue to advocate for my constituents, hold the government to account with the tools I have, assist with local case work, remain in regular contact with local community leaders, stakeholders and other elected officials. I continue to thank and be grateful for the front line essential services workers who are all sacrificing to serve our community. And, I very much look forward to being back in Calgary.

As always, I will continue fighting for our community.

Stay safe. ~Michelle