



Protesters in opposition of stay-home order gather at Michigan capitol

[National](#)

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News 8 will have crews in Lansing and will bring you the latest on the protest as it happens.

LANSING, Mich. (WOOD) — Protesters are converging on Lansing today to show their opposition to the governor’s extended stay-at-home order.

“Operation Gridlock” was scheduled to begin at noon, but many protesters were in Lansing hours before the scheduled start, clogging traffic and honking horns around the capitol.

At 12 p.m. Wednesday, traffic on Allegan Street was at a standstill and the three lanes of Capitol Avenue in front of the state Capitol Building were heavily congested with protesters. News 8 spoke to state Rep. Michele Hoytenga, R-Manton, who was on Capitol Avenue to show her support for the protesters.



Drone 8 showing “Operation Gridlock” in Lansing Wednesday, April 15, 2020.

“I’m just here to support my people. I have a lot of constituents down here right now,” Hoytenga told News 8. “They want go back to work. If they can’t access the website to get (unemployment) benefits, then they want to go back work. Nobody is suggesting we just go back to work willy nilly, we are recommending we adopt the federal guidelines and do it safely.”

Operation Gridlock protesters have been told to stay in their cars and that only people from the same household should share a car. However, many people were seen outside of their vehicles and some gathered on the steps of the Capitol Building.

“I came out here to support the Michigan businesses and stand up for the rights of Michiganders. We believe the governor has overreached and overstepped her rights with our freedoms,” said Joseph Dickson, who was protesting near the steps of the Capitol Building.



People protest the extension of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's Stay Home, Stay Safe order in Lansing in front of Michigan's Capitol on April 15, 2020.

News 8 spoke to Republican Speaker of the House Lee Chatfield on his views of Wednesday's protest. "I think we can be responsible and reasonable at the exact same time. We have to ensure that people's constitutional liberties are protected and that is what we are seeing today. People are coming to the state capitol to ensure their voices are heard and there is nothing more American than that," Chatfield told News 8.



Participants in "Operation Gridlock," a planned protest at Michigan's capitol in Lansing, on April 15, 2020.



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A sign reads "Security without liberty is called prison, Benjamin Franklin" outside the Michigan Capitol in Lansing as part of the "Operation Gridlock" Wednesday, April 15, 2020.



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Opponents to the stay-at-home order, which was [extended](#) last week through April 30, say some of Gov. Gretchen Whitmer’s mandates are excessive and inconsistent.

“People are basically being told what they can and can’t buy at stores. Nothing makes sense. You can buy a bottle of liquor, but you can’t buy a gallon of paint,” Matt Seely with the Michigan Conservative Coalition, one of the organizations behind the protest, told News 8 earlier this week.

Opponents to the measure don’t object to all social distancing requirements — they’re not asking to gather in large groups — but want more temperate rules that would let many people [get back to work](#).

At a Monday press conference, Whitmer [acknowledged the hardships](#) her orders have caused. She said she would always support people’s right to free speech, but asked them to remain separated while they protest so as to not expose themselves, each other or law enforcement to the virus.

According to data released by the state Tuesday, Michigan has recorded [27,001 confirmed cases](#) of coronavirus and 1,768 people have died after contracting it. New figures will be released this afternoon.

In a previous version of the story, it has the incorrect amount of confirmed COVID-19 cases. It has since been corrected.

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