



HOUSE OF DELEGATES WEST VIRGINIA LEGISLATURE

BUILDING 1, ROOM M-260
1900 KANAWHA BLVD., EAST
CHARLESTON, WV 25305-0470
PHONE (304) 340-3240

July 15, 2020

via Hand Delivery

The Honorable James C. Justice
Governor
State of West Virginia
1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East
Charleston, WV 25301

Dear Governor Justice:

We understand these are difficult times in which you are governing and appreciate you having picked a team of some of the smartest experts in our state to help guide us through this pandemic. There is no playbook for that which we are currently experiencing and those experts you have assembled have done excellent work in keeping our residents safe and healthy, for the most part.

Despite those whom you are surrounded by, you nonetheless often say that 'we have a long way to go' to get through this pandemic. We agree.

The State of West Virginia needs to have a plan in place to not only address all aspects of our state's pandemic response but, also, a plan to address how West Virginians 'do life' into the foreseeable future. Most importantly, the citizens of our great state deserve to have their representatives be a part of developing such a response and plan.

To begin, you declared a state of emergency on March 16, 2020, which, by doing so, gives you broad, unilateral authority. We believe that 4 months is too long for any one person to have such authority without appropriate legislative input by those of us who have been elected to serve the people in our communities among who WE live and 'do life.'

Additionally, since you declared a state of emergency, West Virginia has received \$1.25 Billion dollars from the federal government under the CARES Act and may receive considerably more. Quite frankly, it has been far too long for you to serve in a role that many have begun to describe as dictatorial. Neither you nor anyone else in your administration should be operating under the false belief that you (or anybody else) should possess **sole authority** when it comes to spending

\$1.25 Billion dollars of taxpayer money and, further, making decisions that affect every individual and business in the state.

This virus is not going away soon, and many people believe that it will last well into the fall and winter months. You may very well keep West Virginia under a 'state of emergency' during that time, which will mean that the state will be under such designation for nearly a year. Failure to have legislative input for such an extraordinary amount of time is unacceptable to not just us, but also, to the citizens we represent.

We do not believe that the work that is necessary can wait until the next time the Legislature is scheduled to convene in February 2021, nearly a year after the current 'state of emergency' was called. Considering all that needs to be done, we need to act sooner than later.

The House of Delegates is often referred to as the 'people's house' and it represents all 55 counties in this state and every person in it. Every community in our state is affected by this virus. We are hearing from local government leaders, educators and small businesses in our communities, healthcare workers, concerned senior citizens and children faced with uncertainty. Some of those voices are not being heard, and we want their concerns to be addressed in the state's response to this pandemic.

Existing legislative committees can thoroughly examine the issues facing our state and craft policy proposals to address those issues. Our pandemic response framework should be based on input from the many representatives of the citizens in our state and not the sole discretion of one man.

By this letter we are extending you the courtesy of requesting that you call the Legislature into extraordinary session to allow us to help develop a comprehensive pandemic response plan for our state including, but not limited to, deciding the appropriate manner in which any federal funding should be spent to ensure that every penny of it benefits the people of West Virginia.

If we do not receive any indication in the immediate future that you will call the legislature back into an extraordinary session, we will make whatever efforts we can to reach the 60% threshold in both the House of Delegates and the State Senate to call ourselves into session and perform the work that is necessary for this state and her citizens to navigate this long-lasting and unprecedented pandemic.

Sincerely,



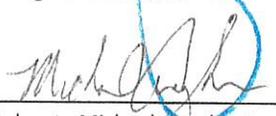
Delegate Tim Miley, Minority Leader



Delegate Jason Barrett



Delegate Mick Bates



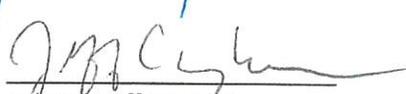
Delegate Michael Angelucci



Delegate Brent Boggs



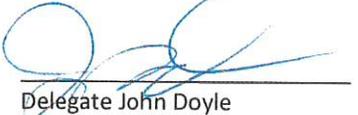
Delegate Sammi Brown



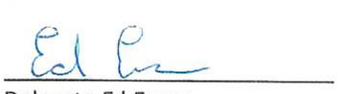
Delegate Jeff Campbell



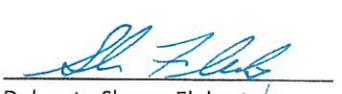
Delegate Mike Caputo



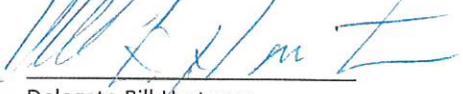
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Delegate Ed Evans



Delegate Shawn Fluharty



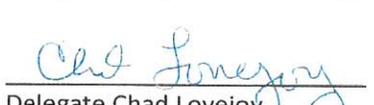
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Delegate Sean Hornbuckle



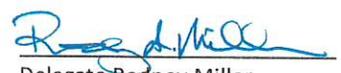
Delegate Cindy Lavender-Bowe



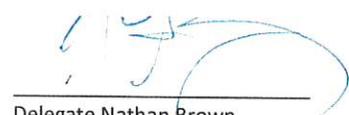
Delegate Chad Lovejoy



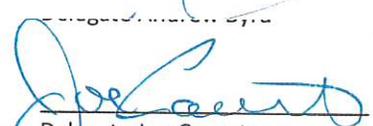
Delegate Linda Longstreth



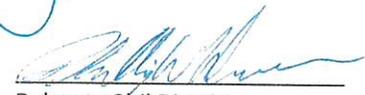
Delegate Rodney Miller



Delegate Nathan Brown



Delegate Joe Canestraro



Delegate Phil Diserio



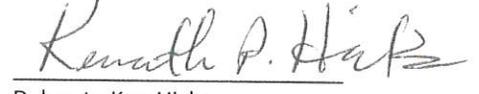
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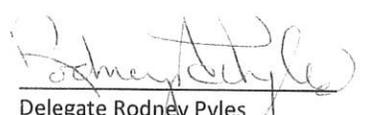
Delegate Barbara Fleischauer



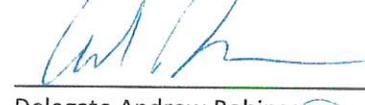
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Delegate Ken Hicks



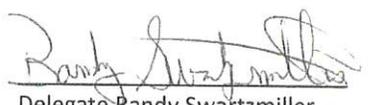
Delegate Rodney Pyles



Delegate Andrew Robinson



Delegate Isaac Sponaugle



Delegate Randy Swartzmiller



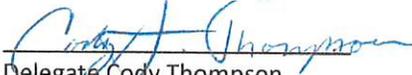
Delegate Dave Pethtel



Delegate Margaret Stagers



Delegate Doug Skaff



Delegate Cody Thompson



Delegate John Williams



Delegate Danielle Walker



Delegate Lisa Zukoff