



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Lieutenant Governor

Justin E. Fairfax
Lieutenant Governor

March 18, 2020

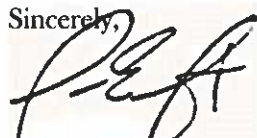
(804) 786-2078
Fax: (804) 786-7514
TTY/TDD: 1-800-828-1120
EMAIL: ltgov@ltgov.virginia.gov

Governor Northam:

Over the past few weeks, the COVID-19 virus, also known as the coronavirus, has continued to spread widely throughout the Commonwealth. As of this morning, seventy-seven (77) confirmed cases have been reported, and it is projected that this virus will continue to spread throughout Virginia and our nation. I have personally heard from many Virginians, including small business owners, employees, healthcare workers, families and community leaders across the Commonwealth pleading that we implement much bolder and swifter measures to flatten the curve and combat this unprecedented health and, consequently, economic threat. In response to those calls and the rapidly growing threats faced by all communities in our Commonwealth, I **strongly suggest** that we immediately implement and plan for the following actions:

- Join Maryland and the District of Columbia and **mandate a ban on all public mass gatherings** at least through April 15th.
- Join Maryland and the District of Columbia and **mandate the closure of bars, restaurants, gyms and theaters to guests** at least through April 15th, while allowing restaurants to maintain approved carryout, delivery services and to-go alcohol sales.
- **Close all K-12 schools, universities, and community colleges** through the end of the current academic term while continuing online education as available; Provided that guidelines be put in place to ensure that no student shall be penalized, and that those on track be allowed to graduate or be promoted to the next academic level, and that all applicable standardized testing requirements, including the SOL tests, be waived or suspended.
- **Create a large-scale state-level Small Business Fund & Grant Program** to make cash grants and long-term, no-interest loans to ensure Virginia's small businesses can maintain cash flow and solvency for at least the next 120 days.
- **Refund or waive the 2020 Business, Professional, and Occupational License tax (BPOL) to all small businesses in the Commonwealth.**
- **Suspend all state and local tax payments for 120 days.**
- **Increase maximum weekly unemployment payments to displaced workers from \$378 to \$800 per week** for at least the next 120 days.
- **Negotiate with lenders and landlords to suspend all rent payments, and mortgage, student loan and burdensome consumer loans** for the next 120 days. In addition, approach credit rating agencies to **freeze all derogatory credit marks for consumers and small businesses for unpaid bills** for the next 120 days.
- **Create a relief fund for faith-based and other community and non-profit institutions** who are severely impacted by mandates prohibiting mass gatherings.
- **Call a Special Session of the General Assembly as necessary** prior to the April 22, 2020 Veto Session in order to implement these and any other emergency measures to address the COVID-19 health crisis and provide direct and substantial economic relief to our small business owners, employees and families throughout Virginia.

I thank you, Governor, for your leadership; but I sincerely hope that we will implement bolder and swifter actions at this critical moment for our Commonwealth and nation.

Sincerely,

Justin E. Fairfax