

# Request for Remote Public Input for House Select Committee on COVID-19 Public Comments Report - LINC

Date Submitted	Category	Name	Comments
03/26/2020 03:01 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Stanley Smith	I do not support vote by mail. Anyone running for any office supporting vote by mail will never get my vote, regardless of party affiliation.
03/26/2020 03:05 PM	Education Working Group	DR Joe Haas	<p>Part 1/Part 2 nonpublic schools which are monitored by different laws than public schools. These laws deal with school calendar, attendance, achievement testing, and many other requirements.</p> <p>Waivers are needed for the remainder of this school year concerning:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. School calendar and length of school year</li> <li>2. Achievement testing</li> <li>3. Achievement testing for Opportunity Scholarship students</li> </ol>
03/26/2020 03:11 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Open the polling stations Chris Coggins	I do not believe voting by mail is a secure method. There is too high a risk for vote tampering. We should either open the polls on election day, or put off election day until it is safe to hold a free and open election.
03/26/2020 03:24 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms Stephanie Ross	Against Vote Harvesting
03/26/2020 03:32 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Thomas Nee	Voting is our civic duty. Our votes should be protected against criminal activity, including ballot by voter fraud.
03/26/2020 03:39 PM	Health Care Working Group	Dr. Matt Thompson	<p>Dear House Select Committee on COVID-19,</p> <p>I am writing to you today as a resident, family man, small business owner, community servant and healthcare provider.</p> <p>There are three topics I'd like to touch on briefly for your consideration.</p> <p>Firstly, as a Doctor of Chiropractic, I know I am helping to care for patients in acute distress or help take the burden of non-infected musculoskeletal patients out of Primary Care offices, Emergency Rooms and Urgent Care, Doctors of Chiropractic are uniquely positioned to provide that service in our communities.</p> <p>I have seen this play out every single shift, every single day over the last 15 years of practice, and especially the last few weeks. My very first patient this week had a migraine that she would have gone to the ER for, but instead was able to find relief in our office. We take care of numerous healthcare providers (including nurses and respiratory therapists) and first responders in our practice. They are thankful we are still open to help them find</p>

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			<p>relief when necessary. We are doing our humble part to help our community.</p> <p>Secondly, I wanted to inquire about COVID-19 antibody testing. Being able to see who has already had the SARS-CoV-2 virus, through the presence of antibodies, would provide a more robust understanding of this virus, and give more accurate data. With the hospitals, universities and biotech companies we have access to in NC, we should be leaders.</p> <p>Thirdly, there is a lot of information about preventing the spread of SARS-CoV-2, and rightfully so! I would love to see information/education on how people in our community can boost their immune systems. I think this provides a sense of control to the people, help to offset some of the anxiety that has developed, and ultimately assist our community in a healthier lifestyle.</p> <p>I have more thoughts and ideas but wanted to get something to you timely as I know the committee will be meeting soon (if not already).</p> <p>Please let me know how I can help, and if you have any questions or concerns.</p> <p>In health, Dr. Matt Thompson Align Family Chiropractic Clayton, NC 919.585.4885 drmatt@align.family</p>
03/26/2020 03:56 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Jean Blasingame	<p>I think the shutdown of virtually the entire state &amp; country is overkill, and a serious overreach of government authority. It would make more sense to issue "stay at home" orders to the most vulnerable and health-compromised people, such as those in assisted living and skilled care homes, hospital patients, people on oxygen, dialysis, etc. Restrict visitors to those locations, advise vulnerable people to stay at home, offer incentives such as free grocery or drug delivery. Compensate employers to allow them to pay any at risk employees if they feel it's safer to stay home for a month. To shut down the entire economy for so long will do more damage for a longer period of time for the majority of people than a potential week or so of sickness. I am not unsympathetic, as I am actually in the older "at-risk" demographic. But when there is a lot of sickness going around, I voluntarily choose to stay at home more, and be extra careful about handwashing. If no one is allowed to build up immunity thru this "pandemic", then what prevents this virus from continuing to infect and wreak havoc on thousands every year? Are we willing to shut down life for a fourth of the year or more EVERY year? I feel the draconian measure of closing virtually everything is a knee jerk reaction, not well thought out, and likely to cause an economic depression that will be around for much longer than the Chinese virus.</p>
03/26/2020 04:52 PM	Health Care Working Group	Mr Joe Aker	<p>Voting is our civic duty. Please do not pass vote by mail.</p>
03/26/2020 05:07 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working	Brian Tomlinson	<p>It is our Civic duty to vote. Do not pass legislation for mail in voting. That undermines the security and process of voting and welcomes voter fraud with open arms. We as NC citizens reserve the right to have fair and secure voting rights!</p>

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	Group		
03/26/2020 05:49 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Karen Steele	The North Carolina General Assembly quit wasting tax payer dollars considering "vote by mail" for the 2020 election. Our elections are our most important civic duty. This is what I have taught my children and I want them to be able to participate in an American citizen's right. Our votes must be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation and voter fraud.
03/26/2020 06:35 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Stephanie Holland	Voting is our civic duty. Our votes should be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation and voter fraud. NO mail in voting...period!!!
03/26/2020 07:25 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Lisa Armour	Do not allow voting by mail. Everyone should have to vote in person. It is to easy to fraudulently vote by mail because no one would be verifying the individual. Absentee voting should require a notary to confirm it. We already have way to much voter fraud going on because in my opinion, even 1 case of voter fraud is too many. If anything enhance early voting. Open more early voter sites, extend early voting hours and days. If we still need to keep the separation, have the distance marked. Male it easier to have extra people to help out. Make it so those who would be standing outside of the actual room where voting takes place don't have to go through as rigorous training as those overseeing the actual voting. Someone making sure people are keeping their 6 foot distance does need the same training as a voter judge does. Just do not allow voting by mail like is being talked about.
03/26/2020 07:54 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Garon Ballard	Voting is our civic duty. Our votes should be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation and voter fraud.
03/26/2020 08:04 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Jill Trufant	We need to reform our elections so that we are ready to have safe and secure elections during this pandemic. I urge the Committee to consider: Automatic Voter Registration when you turn 18, or electronic voter registration; Universal vote by mail with pre-paid envelopes that are accepted up to the election date and that do not require notarization or two witnesses. We need to enact these changes now. Thank you.
03/26/2020 08:13 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Vote by mail Amy Good	I am concerned about how the corona virus will affect in person voting for coming elections. We need to shift to mail in ballots for the safety of the public and or elections.
03/26/2020 08:32 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Me Laurie Lima	It is time for mail voting with a tracking mechanism be put in place for ALL elections - also universal broadband is needed across the entire state to begin bring NC into currant standards of registration voting etc not to overlook the technology that all nc children need to foundation and secure their own future - including meeting their educational needs thank you

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03/26/2020 08:32 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Robert Brinson	Voting is our civic duty. Our votes should be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation and voter fraud. Therefore, I urge to reject vote by mail.
03/26/2020 08:39 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr. Barry Cartner	Voting is our civic duty. Our votes should be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation and voter fraud.
03/26/2020 08:41 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	I support mail-in ballots John Hollingsworth	I request that we convert to a 100% mail-in ballot system. I support all efforts which would make this possible. It is the wise and compassionate way to conduct elections.
03/26/2020 08:53 PM	Health Care Working Group	CRNA David Armstrong	Its time to allow all Advanced Practice nurses, CRNA's, Nurse Practitioners, Nurse Midwives to be able to practice to the full scope of their training and education, without the need for supervision. Especially, now as the CV19 crisis is looming at our hospital doors. There will not be enough providers with the skill sets need to adequately, and safely manage theses critically ill patients. Its time to move into the future of health care, and not be tied to old, ineffective and costly practice models.
03/26/2020 09:09 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	T Wood	Do not allow ballot harvesting.
03/26/2020 09:12 PM	Education Working Group	Childcare teacher Christine Bowen	Please look into helping childcare workers with medical insurance, paid leave and raises as we are considered essential employees in the covid-19 pandemic... we are risking our lives and our families to be here for our communities to help serve and take care of our children. I love my job and we are on the verge of closing and being laid off. We need your help today. Please consider us, we are hard workers and our health care working parents need us to remain open to serve their needs. Consider us we are important too!!
03/26/2020 09:33 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Paula Bruckman	I strongly oppose voting by mail. Our elections are our most important civic duty and they must be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation and vote fraud.
03/26/2020 09:38 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr Michael Watson	Voting is our civic duty. Our votes should be protected against criminal activity, including ballot manipulation (Harvesting) and voter fraud.
03/26/2020 09:45 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Mrs. Wanda Stell	No way should we submit to the Democrats. Voting by mail would do just that.

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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		
03/26/2020 09:57 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Celeste Richie	I'd like to submit my support for moving to easier vote-by-mail procedures, including being able to certify your own ballot with just one witness, having pre-paid return envelopes, and counting all ballots that are sent by election day.
03/26/2020 10:55 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Yes on mail in ballots Rachael Jankowich	We need access to mail in ballots for November election.
03/26/2020 11:22 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Debbera Carson	Please organize vote by mail on a massive scale. It can be done in a secure fashion such that electoral and voter fraud will not be problems. States such as Oregon have successfully implemented vote by mail. If they can do it, so can we in North Carolina. If we get started now, we can be ready by fall, at least with greatly expanded absentee ballots, made both easier and more secure than what we have now. If we combine expanded vote by mail, well organized early voting, and election day voting with the day declared a holiday, we can be sure that regardless of the situation with the Coronavirus we will have a fair and free election in the fall.
03/26/2020 11:22 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Phyllis Portie-Ascott	I am writing to express strong support for mail-in voting in November to ensure that every eligible voter's voice is heard.
03/26/2020 11:36 PM	Education Working Group	Camille Conzola	<p>Hi</p> <p>Not sure if you are looking at more than emergency because of COVID19 or if you are looking at general plans for 2019.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Heard rumors that 2 weeks in June will be added to the calendar. Can you do that? You wouldn't allow WCPSS to move spring break days because the calendar is set. So by that logic you can't add days to the calendar. Cant have it both ways.</li> <li>2. The legislature must return calendar control to the individual school districts.</li> <li>3. If you insist on keeping control of the calendar stop tying spring break to Easter. When it is April, It is too disruptive to high school students who are preparing for AP exams.</li> <li>4. The calendar needs to start a bit earlier and second quarter should end before Christmas break.</li> <li>5. All school employees should be paid during the shutdown. The payroll has been budgeted and is not dependent on kids in school. This means ALL employees!</li> <li>6. Online distance learning needs to be developed in a uniform manner for future years. Events of this nature will come up again. And a plan that can be immediately deployed is crucial and necessary.</li> <li>7. Year end exams(EOG, NCFE,EOC). If students return to school it will be necessary to</li> </ol>

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			<p>assess knowledge in courses. Year end exams should be for assessment purposes but not for grading.</p> <p>Thank you for considering</p>
03/26/2020 11:55 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs Cynthia Davidson	Please protect the American voters buy not allowing voting by mail. We must secure our elections and add voter ID! Please, No voting by mail, it's too easy for voter fraud!
03/26/2020 11:58 PM	Education Working Group		<p>I am a teacher in Charlotte &amp; resident of Union County. I have heard Rep. Horn comment that the committee is considering lengthening this school year or adding days to the start of the next academic year. My question is: why are we working from home? I and my colleagues, my principal, and our support staff are working all day every day to provide remote learning opportunities for our students. Some are learning new online platforms. Some are designing brand new lessons that are relevant to the times. ALL are going above and beyond the regular call of duty. Considering adding days to the academic calendar discredits all of the work we are doing. Please do not ask us to work more than the normal amount of school days. Personally, I already work at least 50 hours weekly – and I am doing even more now from home. Do you not think I work enough? Adding days to the calendar suggests that you don't.</p> <p>Did I forget to mention that I vote in every election? We are watching – what happens in Raleigh tells us how much you respect teachers &amp; school support staff. "Double jeopardy" is not what will keep highly qualified teachers in education. It's what will drive us to go back into the private sector. We love our work &amp; our students. What we don't love is being abused.</p>
03/27/2020 12:29 AM	Education Working Group	High School Teacher Madison McGinnis	I am a high school teacher in Mecklenburg County. I read an article that suggested we may be required to work some extra time, either during this school year or the next to make up for time lost during this pandemic (article: <a href="https://www.wfae.org/post/legislator-virus-closing-could-lead-more-class-time-summer#stream/0">https://www.wfae.org/post/legislator-virus-closing-could-lead-more-class-time-summer#stream/0</a> ). I am firmly against this motion and quite upset by the suggestion. I know that I, my coworkers, and my school admin have been working incredibly hard to make online instruction worthwhile. Many of us are working far more hours than we did during the regular school week in order to reach out to students, differentiate this new form of instruction, and move our lessons to an online format. This has been difficult for us, and it has been difficult for the students, but we are working hard to make it work. It is because of this effort and these extra hours we have put in that I ask you to forgive this lost time, rather than make up for it elsewhere.
03/27/2020 12:31 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs. Sheila Beaudry	Due to the virus and the fact that it is likely to re-emerge as the weather gets cooler in the fall, it is a necessity to change the way elections are held to allow for safe voting. Other states have mail-in balloting and that is something we should strongly consider in NC. It would also be easier and cheaper than setting up polling sites all over the state in every precinct. Our current procedures for absentee ballots are too difficult to obtain a ballot. It should be simple enough that my 97 year old mother could do it.
03/27/2020 04:39 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Ms Jean Lecluyse	Please,with all speed, make mail in ballots mandatory for the November elections.

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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		
03/27/2020 04:52 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr Ralf Walters	I am against mail-in voting due to the possibility of voter fraud and the compromise to the integrity of the election results which many are concerned about vis a vis Photo ID which was passed by a majority of NC voters. If approved, it will become a difficult precedent to remove in future elections.
03/27/2020 07:03 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms Krista Westervelt	North Carolina should move to voting by mail in order to protect the right of North Carolinians to vote in these uncertain times. Please help protect both public health (for voters and election workers) and our democratic process by making this shift.  Thank you!
03/27/2020 07:14 AM	Health Care Working Group	Pete Rafferty	I get the whole idea on the spread, but once tested you should be cleared to go back to work/school. The fear that it will spread is NEVER going to go away and takes only one person. Some will die yes, but some die every year from the flu and nothing is shut down and life goes on. The economic flu is going to hurt much worse and even cause some deaths. I can go on and on with examples and numbers but hopefully ....
03/27/2020 07:26 AM	Health Care Working Group	PA-C Mark Shepherd	This week hospitals across the Old North State are seeing the rising storm of COVID-19 Pandemic. With-in days to weeks we will see hospitals overrun and providers pushed to there breaking point. North Carolina created one solution to the provider shortage over 50 years ago with the creation of the nation's first Physician Assistant program at Duke University. Now it is time to unleash the full might of Physician Assistants across the State. My colleagues in Critical Care, Emergency Medicine, and Hospitalist are already standing on the front line. We need to be joined by our brothers and sisters is subspecialties that are currently without patients since their practices are closed. Every PA in the state is boarded in general, primary, and pediatric care. It is time for the Medical Board and Legislator to give PAs unrestricted practice authority so agreements with supervising physicians will not be a barrier to PAs helping their fellow North Carolinians.
03/27/2020 08:02 AM	Health Care Working Group	RT (R) Susan Stutson	In no way, shape or form should there be mail in ballots! And a photo ID should be a requirement for all voters! Oh, yea, did I mention that only Legal American citizens should be allowed to vote? Something needs to be done to address this issue ASAP!
03/27/2020 08:25 AM	Education Working Group	Ms. Erika Flanagan	Extending the school year is unnecessary in the time period that we live. Schools systems around the state have digital learning days, North Carolina Virtual School allows students to do an entire class via distance learning. There is no reason to extend the school year if you allow teachers to provide instruction online. If students do not have access to internet than they can request a paper copy of assignments. As a teacher, I have been ready to roll since March 13th and I have been prevented from teaching by the state. Invest Collegiate Charter School is an excellent example of how instruction can continue without a brick and mortar building. Students were given paper copies of assignments and they meet with each subject teacher once a week virtually to review the assignments that they were supposed to complete (a flipped classroom). The General Assembly's bureaucracy is the problem with continuing the school year. In addition, if you extend the school year you will have to pay the teachers for additional days as you are asking teacher to work from home



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			currently. Since the General Assembly cannot seem to find the money to give teachers' a raise it seems questionable that they could afford to pay teachers to work extra weeks in the year. In addition people make summer plans and should not be penalized for scheduling a vacation when school was not supposed to be open. Attendance will be an issue for both students and teachers.
03/27/2020 08:28 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Vickie Atkinson	We need to take action now to expand and protect mail-in voting. As the pandemic expands around us and our ability to vote in person may be curtailed for public health, we must protect democracy. We need to expand the ability of citizens to exercise our right to vote. Voting by mail is an essential tool.
03/27/2020 08:47 AM	Education Working Group	Susan Sparks	Yesterday the public was made aware of suggestions to add days to this school year calendar or add days to our calendar in August. I'm sure this makes sense on paper, but please understand the complete and utter logistical nightmare this would be for our students and their families. It is not in the best interest of our students for classes to end or begin school with a number of student and staff absences due to last-minute changes to the schedule.
03/27/2020 08:53 AM	Education Working Group	Ms. Elizabeth Mosley	I'm glad to see that requests for school calendar flexibility are being considered. This is something that districts have needed for a long time, not just now. One of the proposals being discussed is for schools to come back to school early in August. I don't understand the point of this. I teach high school. I'll have entirely new students in the fall, and will teach new sections of my course. Students in lower grades will be in a different grade. How will extending NEXT year's school year help THIS year's students?
03/27/2020 08:55 AM	Education Working Group	Philip Davis	Teachers are effective at adapting to changing circumstances. We know how to work together with the courses around ours to prioritize content and keep students on track. More important to adjusting the calendar (which I don't think is needed), would be allowing new content to be covered during virtual instruction and even more so to allow the assignments during this time to be graded. Many students feel no motivation or urgency to do any work if there is no grade attached, especially seniors. Dropping state made finals (which is something that should be considered regardless of circumstances) is huge and allows us extra time at the end of the year as is to cover more content that we see as most valuable.
03/27/2020 08:57 AM	Education Working Group	Mrs	Since we are working during school closings, Online-developing, creating, grading, and contacting all 200 of my students..... If you guys vote to extend schools to make up for lost physical seat time I would expect to get paid for these "Extra Months"! Some Teachers need the summer for our 2nd or 3rd jobs to make ends meet or to live comfortable-without worry! Not to mention the summer seasonal jobs and tourism would suffer! The economy is already bad enough now!
03/27/2020 09:27 AM	Health Care Working Group	Vickie Atkinson	Thank you for your leadership on NC's COVID19 response. It is now time to extend the stay-at-home order to the entire state before it is too late. Please, please take action as the state medical society and state hospital association are urging. Our lives depend on it. Thank you.
03/27/2020 09:30 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Mrs. Linda g. Slone	Voting IS OUR Civic duty .



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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		
03/27/2020 09:33 AM	Education Working Group	Miriam Chu	Going to vote by mail & allowing ballot harvesting invites vote fraud. Didn't we just see a 9th District election overturned for this reason?
03/27/2020 09:42 AM	Education Working Group		Hello, I am an educator concerned about the discussion for adding days to the calendar for either this school year or next. During this whole pandemic, teachers have been working tirelessly from our homes adjusting to online instruction and continuing to provide for our students. This is something we could not have prepared for but still we are adapting. We did not have training, we just immediately took action. If there is discussion of adding days to "make up" for lost days during the year, we should either reject that idea or teachers should be getting paid extra for giving more time. I would understand not getting extra pay if we had taken these days off from our jobs but again, we have worked this entire time (some of us, even more than normal trying to adjust). Please consider this when deciding whether or not extra school days are added. Also, keep in mind the amount of plans that would be interfering with. COVID-19 has already cancelled so many travel plans and activities for everyone. If you adjust the school year to be longer, that will run into teachers plans, parent plans, student plans, etc. You will be seeing high absence rates from both students and teachers, alike. It's a weird time not only for us, but for the entire world. Everyone is in the same predicament, so we should just move forward with instruction as best as we can, and adapt as next school year approaches.
03/27/2020 09:45 AM	Education Working Group	Mrs Kimberly Renner	As a teacher and parent I am against extending the school year. Both my students and children are working the same or more at home and we should reward them by completing the year ON TIME. As a teacher I am working more at home to make sure my students are receiving the best education as possible. I am committed to make sure my students, co-workers, etc. get the best from me and extending the school year would hurt everyone involved. I feel like this is a slap in the face for both teachers, students, parents, etc. if we extend the school year. Proms, athletics, clubs, possibly graduation have/will be cancel. Let us make the right decision and finish school ON TIME or early. Thank you
03/27/2020 09:46 AM	Education Working Group	Ms Sherry Faulk	I don't see a need to extend the school year. I am working 2 or 3 times harder to provide work for my students. Some students are doing the work. Others not so much. Typically what I see in a regular class day. I don't see a need to extend the school year. Unless you want teachers to work longer, for the same pay, I might add, to try and bring the slacking students up to date.  As to the idea of end of school or beginning. Tough call. If you extend the end of the year, teachers have built a relationship with these students. We know who needs the extra help and who doesn't. We know who is not doing work and the areas they need improvement on. And you have already cancelled many of the events students are staying in school to participate in. Prom and graduation. By the end of this year we will be tired. ready for that summer break. Its a time of renewal and refreshment for the upcoming year. I feel we will have done the best we could with the students we have.  I teach High School students. I see no reason to extend next year.

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03/27/2020 10:04 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr. RICHARD FAIN	We need continuity of our State Operations .
03/27/2020 10:29 AM	Education Working Group	Mr. Justin Parmenter	<p>Suggestions:</p> <p>Waive teacher evaluation requirements. Current NCEES rubric hasn't been validated for virtual instruction, but administrators are using it to complete evaluations on it anyway.</p> <p>Suspend school performance grades, EVAAS and related teacher bonuses for next year. We won't have data for them.</p>
03/27/2020 10:39 AM	Education Working Group	Ms Shannon Watkins	Please do not add extra school days to K12 schools. This will further demoralize the school system.
03/27/2020 10:43 AM	Education Working Group		<p>As a teacher who has been working for five years in the North Carolina Public Education System, I ask that you not extend the school year and do not begin next year earlier. We, educators, have been working extremely hard the past two weeks to make sure our students are well and taken care of. I have worked more hours per week during the last two weeks then I typically work on a regular week. During a regular school week, I work anywhere between 40-55 hours, while these last two weeks I have worked well over 65 hours each week. Although we haven't been able to grade any assignments, I have been posting review assignments, holding one-on-one video chats with students who need extra support, and group video chats with my classes so that they could ask any questions about any material that they needed help on. This "school break" that we are having due to COVID-19 is not actually a break. Students are continuing to work on school work, even though it is not mandatory (right now). Students are mentally and emotionally figuring out how to deal with the stress of this situation. Students are serving as "day care" for their younger siblings because parents are still having to work. If you extend the school year, then students and teachers will not have that summer break that they need to decompress from the school year before starting again in August. Our PLC (Professional Learning Community) has already established through a video conference what material we have left to cover in our respective courses and what material is vital for the students continuing through their Math courses for the remainder of their high school years. We have determined what topics we absolutely need to cover from now until the remainder of the school year to help the students be successful next year in math. Although we will be cutting out some of the curriculum, I believe our main focus is the well being of our students and ensuring they feel prepared going into next year.</p> <p>Whatever you do, do not put these kids through more than what this situation is already doing to them.</p>
03/27/2020 10:49 AM	Education Working Group	Mr Brian Jodice	<p>Please waivers for the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- School calendar and length of school year</li> <li>- Achievement testing</li> <li>- Achievement testing for Opportunity Scholarship/special needs students</li> </ul>
03/27/2020 10:50 AM	Health Care Working	Mrs. Brandi Reagan	As the Executive Director of The Dragonfly House Children's Advocacy Center, we are

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	Group		<p>experiencing a loss in many areas. I am sharing some bullet points that are affecting our agency and operations at this time. I would love the opportunity to discuss these in more depth as I do have specific breakdowns of dollars and details that I can share about each of these bullet points.</p> <p>? The postponement of our largest fundraiser event of the year (loss of approx \$100,000 in donations) - including meeting new donors and engaging in long-term support. This fundraiser will not happen until AT LEAST October, which is a separate fiscal operating year so the loss for our current operating year budget is tremendous.</p> <p>? April Child Abuse Prevention Month coin drives and donations from schools</p> <p>? Item Donations (typically cleaning supplies, snacks, small toys/games/prizes, stationary) following Child Abuse Prevention Month speaking engagements</p> <p>? Day-to-Day donations (supplies/monetary)</p> <p>? Donations from custom T-shirts, pinwheels, etc. during Child Abuse Prevention Month</p> <p>? Blue Sunday donations and support from churches that donate during the month of April</p> <p>? An irreplaceable loss is the opportunity to educate in-person. We also lost connections with our local schools and groups that scheduled prevention between March 13 and the projected date of school opening May 15. We will most likely not get those dates back; however I will attempt to get them rescheduled for 2020-2021. If my calculations of predicted numbers based on the schedules I have are correct that is approximately 1100 kids.</p>
03/27/2020 10:53 AM	Education Working Group	Administrator Penny Hill	We would like to request a waiver for students with special needs or Opportunity Scholarship recipients for achievement testing. Due to the transition to remote learning, we will not be administering our annual achievement testing until the fall of 2020-21.
03/27/2020 10:54 AM	Education Working Group	Mrs. Eve Tuset	<p>Please consider waivers for the following:</p> <p>School calendar and length of school year</p> <p>Achievement testing</p> <p>Achievement testing for Opportunity Scholarship/special needs students</p>
03/27/2020 11:03 AM	Education Working Group		<p>There has been talk of continuing school after the school year and trying to plan for that - I think the time would be better spent trying to help the students get access to the tools they need so they can continue their education now. Many students are grade-driven which means only a handful will do supplementary work on their own for the good of education. If we can take away the issue of students needing supplies then teachers can start educating via Canvas Chat, Google Classrooms, Zoom, or whatever other platform they can for face-to-face contact. This will also allow for students to continue to learn and build stronger connections with people. If the school year continues into June - there will be a problem with absences for the kids that do not need a high grade to progress to the next level and if in August - kids who graduated or kids who moved on to the next school will not have any repercussions for not meeting criteria earlier in the previous year. I know these are unprecedented times, but if you are going to do what is right for the kids, then you need to give them some semblance of normalcy - and that starts with showing them that you think they are important enough to use resources on them now. Many of them have already sacrificed enough (giving up traditions and rites of passage found at school) - and many of them want to see their friends, their teachers, and some of their previous life before this catastrophe. It is not like the teachers are going to hold the same time</p>

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			expectations they would when the kids are at school. They have been told to give manageable lessons with an abbreviated time period to account for any new responsibilities the child may have inherited in this time. Show the kids you care about them now as instead of making them wait (as we always make them do) for something as we always do. Then if we still need the time later then you can add it on wherever you think it is necessary, but at least we can say that we did everything in our power and now we need this too (since the article I read made it sound like taking time from summer break is a regrettable decision - exhaust every avenue before making such a regrettable decision).
03/27/2020 11:09 AM	Education Working Group	Mrs Susan Harrell	I am the director of a school for students with learning disabilities. We are unlikely to be able to administer our annual EOY individualized achievement tests, given the current shut down of schools through May 15. We will be able to have 178 days of instruction, but the present situation warrants a waiver for all schools, public and private, to have minimum days of instruction waived as well as EOY testing. Additionally, the waiver should include testing required for students who receive funding from NC Disabilities and Opportunity Grants. Thank you for your consideration.
03/27/2020 11:23 AM	Education Working Group	Tim Montgomery	Good Morning, I am Tim Montgomery Head of School at The Piedmont School/John Yowell Academy in High Point, NC. My concern is with the testing requirements for students at our school who receive the Opportunity Education Grant, the Children with Disabilities Grant, and the ESA of which we have many. We have been a part of these grant programs for many years and have consistently provided the required testing in a timely fashion to NCSEAA. This year due to the COVID-19 outbreak we have only administered testing to a portion of our students. The final group were to be tested the week we were required to close school. I would respectfully request that due to these unprecedented events of late, the testing requirements and submission be waived for the 2019-2020 reporting school year. Thank you in advance for your consideration of my request. Regards, Tim Montgomery
03/27/2020 11:30 AM	Health Care Working Group	Ms. Debra Hodges	Many members of the working poor without insurance also make up the workforce now deemed "essential": cashiers, stock clerks, agricultural workers, delivery drivers, elderly caregivers, child care workers, health care workers and gas station clerks." "The decision to forgo an increase in state Medicaid programs, an ideological resistance borne of fiscal conservatism in Republican-controlled state legislatures, has left nearly 5 million people across the country without access to health care coverage and meant states turned down billions of federal dollars that would have come with the expansion. In North Carolina, expansion would have allowed the state to provide coverage to more than 194,000 members of the working poor who earn too much money to qualify for Medicaid but too little to purchase their own insurance plans. The state legislature balked at having to foot 10 percent of the fund by 2020, which means North Carolina also could not receive an estimated \$40 billion worth of federal funds since 2014."
03/27/2020 11:31 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mail-in Voting Jeff Smith	Hello, NC General Assembly Representatives. I am very concerned about the
03/27/2020 11:36 AM	Continuity of State	November Election Jeff	Hello, NC General Assembly. I hope all is well with each of you. Please disregard my

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	Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Smith	previous, incomplete Comment that was sent in error. I am a resident of Hillsborough and very concerned about the ability for myself and others to vote in the November election due to potential prolonged COVID-19 issues. What is the General Assembly doing to ensure North Carolinians are able to vote in this crucial election in the event that current conditions exist come election times Automatically sending out mail-in ballots, etc?
03/27/2020 11:58 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	A. Avery	Lottery has closed in-person claims of winning tickets "to protect those workers." They should also SUSPEND SALES 'to protect store workers.' And to protect vulnerable people who give their money away by gambling. Thanks for all your efforts.
03/27/2020 11:59 AM	Education Working Group	Mrs. Donna Bowman	We would request waivers for Achievement Testing and Length of School Year. Our school is working online currently and making good progress; however, the restrictions of a closed school campus prevent us from fully meeting the requirements of each of these concerns.  Thank you.
03/27/2020 12:00 PM	Education Working Group	School Calendar Marissa Langford	As a parent of a senior, I would like to know the plans for the 2019-2020 school calendar. Will the past two weeks be made up? Will the general assembly adjust the end of the school year? I've heard "rumors" of school in July or going back early in August. Neither of those are reasonable options for a senior who plans to be starting college in August - especially one moving out of state. Parents and students are stressed and have no answers. Moving online rapidly without a plan has not been smooth at least make a good decision on the calendar.  Will this sudden upheaval of schools lead to requiring all school districts to have continuity plans?
03/27/2020 01:18 PM	Education Working Group	Tomis Parker	Please consider waiving requirements on school calendars and standardized testing for grades 3, 6, 9 and Opportunity Scholarship recipients for nonpublic schools. We are doing the best to serve our families through virtual offerings and weekly community check-ins. If we are fortunate to have any school this year (end of May, beginning of June) we would rather not focus that time on testing.
03/27/2020 01:18 PM	Health Care Working Group	Mr. Tom Akins	Thank you for the opportunity to provide specific policy and budget recommendations on behalf of LeadingAge North Carolina and our 70 member communities statewide caring for more than 22,000 North Carolina seniors and the 16,000 staff that serve them. We bring these recommendations in a spirit of cooperation and collaboration and with the understanding that some of these requests may not be within the purview of the General Assembly. We include all of these so you have an idea of the myriad of issues facing our member communities.  Ensuring that Healthcare Workers Caring for the Elderly are Prioritized <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure that vulnerable populations and entities that serve those populations receive priority access to Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and COVID-19 testing. While hospitals and emergency responders receive priority attention, those that serve vulnerable populations MUST be seen equally as important for access to resources.</li> </ul>

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			<p>Staffing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adopt United States Department of Homeland Security Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's (CISA) guidance around the definition of "essential healthcare worker." (<a href="https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA_Guidance_on_the_Essential_Critical_Infrastructure_Workforce_508C_0.pdf">https://www.cisa.gov/sites/default/files/publications/CISA_Guidance_on_the_Essential_Critical_Infrastructure_Workforce_508C_0.pdf</a>)</li> <li>• Provide guidance around how "essential healthcare workers" will be identified while in transit to or from work.</li> <li>• Include staff of continuing care retirement communities as a part of any definitions of "health care workers."</li> <li>• Raise the allowed income threshold for retired workers who are receiving social security/retirement benefits to permit them to work.</li> <li>• Provide and distribute emergency state or federal funding for skilled nursing, adult care homes, and continuing care retirement community staff to offer paid sick leave to all staff who have exhausted their sick leave benefits to avoid sick staff interacting with frail, vulnerable residents, and ensure that staff aren't forced to come to work because they have no other financial option to support their families. Additionally, such funds should be utilized to replenish workers' paid time off that was/is used related to COVID-19 illness to the employee or their dependents.</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make available transportation vouchers for skilled nursing, adult care homes, and continuing care retirement community staff.</li> <li>• Allow non-certified staff and volunteers to provide care and services as deemed appropriate by the facility, and establish processes to quickly direct individuals not working due to the COVID-19 crisis (closed schools, restaurants, churches, etc.) to quickly join the long-term care workforce. Issue a blanket waiver for laid off workers to work in long-term care under the supervision of nurse in a SNF, with guidance on scope of services these individuals can provide.</li> <li>• Allow prospective CNAs to receive credit for past experience to serve as a CNA in the certification process.</li> <li>• Grant reciprocity for CNAs registered in other states and for CNAs who were in the pipeline for CNA testing to be able to work until Pearson VUE starts testing again.</li> <li>• Delay State of North Carolina state income tax filing and payment without penalty deadline to eliminate the need to file a state income tax return or an extension to July 15, 2020.</li> <li>• Allow a CNA with an expired registration to renew their license and become active for a period of time to assist with care.</li> <li>• Allow community colleges to conduct emergency CNA training classes across the state.</li> </ul> <p>Regulatory</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Waive the 30/60/90-day schedule requirement for in-person physician visits for nursing home residents and allow visits to be conducted, as appropriate, via telehealth options.</li> <li>• Create provisions allowing for additional flexibilities to allow for the utilization of physician extenders in place of Medical Directors and attending physicians, and via telehealth options.</li> <li>• Provide access to the more than \$30 million in CMP funds for skilled nursing facilities to supplement programs designed to improve nursing facility residents' quality of life</li> </ul>



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			<p>during this emergency period.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow nursing homes to implement time-savings processes, including but not limited to full completion of the Minimum Data Set while still maintaining Medicare/Medicaid payment levels for these residents and reasonable leeway in the assessment and care planning process.</li> <li>• Suspend annual and other routine licensure surveys for state licensed only facilities (i.e., Medicare has adopted such practice for Medicare Certified nursing homes and hospitals but this is not sufficient for state licensed or Medicare certified only facilities).</li> <li>• Provide flexibility around meal time requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Background Checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor the availability and timeliness of background check processes.</li> </ul> <p>Child Care</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clarify that childcare arrangements for “healthcare” workers include continuing care retirement communities, skilled nursing facilities, and adult care homes.</li> <li>• Child care tax credits for skilled nursing, adult care homes, and continuing care retirement community staff.</li> </ul> <p>2</p> <p>3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide liability protection for YMCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, child care centers, and others to provide 7 AM till 8 PM child care for essential workers.</li> <li>• Continue to address the need for child care for aging services employees who must go to work with a specific focus on relaxing licensing requirements.</li> <li>• Relax screening and licensure requirements to provide child care services for employees, in spaces separate from participants.</li> </ul> <p>Facilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide funding for masks, gloves, and gowns that reduce the spread of COVID-19 and keep caregivers and residents healthy.</li> <li>• Provide funds and special treatment for PPE for small providers (Adult Care Homes and family or group homes that may not do enough volume to warrant consideration by the vendors).</li> <li>• Provide flexibility on the use of non-certified/adult care beds to temporarily create private rooms for infection control/isolation.</li> <li>• Consider prompt desk reviews by the construction division for renovations underway and almost complete.</li> <li>• Request that the President defer HUD mortgage payments during the emergency declaration.</li> <li>• Provide flexibility with mortgage payments and covenant reporting requirements, especially those required by the North Carolina Medical Care Commission.</li> <li>• Provide flexibility with North Carolina Medical Care Commission debt covenant ratio requirements.</li> </ul> <p>Legal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consider appropriate limits place on damages sought in court proceedings and to</li> </ul>

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			<p>develop strict guidelines for proving fault.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strengthen Price gouging penalties on PPE.</li> </ul> <p>Thank you for considering our requests. Please reach out to Tom Akins, President and CEO of LeadingAge North Carolina, at tom.akers@leadingagenc.org (919 571-8333 ext.3) with any ou have or for additional information.</p>
03/27/2020 01:19 PM	Education Working Group	Mr. Mike Woods	<p>Please consider waving the state requirements for the following items for 2019-2020 :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>180 school days for the 2019-2020 school year.</li> <li>Administer to all students in grades 3, 6 and 9, a nationally standardized achievement test in the subject areas of English grammar, reading, spelling and math for the 2019-2020 school year.</li> <li>Achievement testing for Opportunity Scholarship/special needs students for the 2019-2020 school year.</li> </ol>
03/27/2020 02:08 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Veronica Martish	<p>10000000% against &gt;"The North Carolina General Assembly is currently considering vote by mail for the 2020 election. This will allow ballot harvesting, one of the easiest ways imaginable to throw an election. Most vulnerable are local elections". VOTE NO. A cheaters haven.</p>
03/27/2020 02:16 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Carol Scofield	<p>I support Mail-In Ballot voting. Please ensure this is in place for the 2020 General Election.</p>
03/27/2020 02:19 PM	Education Working Group	Head of School kim freedman	<p>Please consider waivers regarding the School calendar and length of the school year during this crisis. In addition, please consider the need to waive achievement testing for Opportunity Scholarship/special needs students. These students are already significantly disadvantaged by remote learning</p>
03/27/2020 02:25 PM	Education Working Group	Dr. Kelly Alves	<p>I am the director of a private school for children with autism. Currently, between 65% - 80% of our students receive the Children With Disabilities Grant. One requirement of the grant is that the students complete annual achievement testing. As you are aware, this will be IMPOSSIBLE with the schools closed through May 15 at the earliest. Our students have diligently worked remotely, but we cannot test remotely. Even IF we return to school on May 18th, our students will NOT be equipped to take a standardized test when the return. We will not be able to secure volunteer proctors, resume a normal schedule, or prepare our students for even further disruptions to their schedule in a mere 3 weeks before the end of the year. I am respectfully requesting the mandated testing requirement be waived for this school year.</p> <p>Thank you,</p> <p>Dr. Kelly Alves</p>
03/27/2020 02:40 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Dr Michele Jonsson Funk	<p>I would encourage the committee to allow voting by mail for the November election. This will allow the greatest number of eligible and registered voters to participate in the</p>

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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		election while limiting any risk to the public health due to ongoing SARS-COV-2 transmission at that time.
03/27/2020 02:45 PM	Health Care Working Group	Mrs. Morgan Gramann	<p>I respectfully submit this feedback in response to your request for input on how best to respond with emergency legislative measures to address issues facing families and businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This feedback is submitted on behalf of members and partners of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, a statewide, non-partisan coalition that convenes, mobilizes, supports, and empowers partners to advance equitable policies that reduce health disparities, prevent chronic disease, and promote health.</p> <p>Additional context for our recommendations is attached. In short, we recommend that the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide an additional \$6 million in immediate funding to every Feeding the Carolinas food bank in North Carolina;</li> <li>• support our farmers by keeping farmers markets open, allocating additional resources to help farmers meet CDC health and safety recommendations, and provide funding for emergency payments;</li> <li>• continue to submit waiver requests to USDA to maximize SNAP and WIC funding and flexibility and take other actions to expand access to SNAP and WIC;</li> <li>• provide funding to child nutrition programs, providing maximum flexibility for the funds to be used to purchase food or for general operational needs;</li> <li>• close the health insurance coverage gap to ensure all North Carolinians have access to care; and</li> <li>• take steps to ensure all North Carolinians have access to broadband and technology allowing them to work or study from home.</li> </ul> <p>Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 919.308.8800 or <a href="mailto:morgan@ncallianceforhealth.org">morgan@ncallianceforhealth.org</a> should you have any questions or need additional information.</p> <p>Thank you for your leadership during this uncertain time.</p> <p>Warmly,</p> <p>Morgan Wittman Gramann Executive Director</p> <p>Feeding the Carolinas Food Banks</p> <p>We ask the State to provide an additional \$6 million in immediate funding to every Feeding the Carolinas food bank in North Carolina. This funding must be flexible to allow food banks to purchase the additional food required to respond to the crisis due to the closing of schools and layoffs caused by the appropriate government required closings. In addition, these funds should help support the management, storage, and transportation of these critical food resources along with additional labor required to manage the additional need and loss of volunteer resources created by required social distancing and the protection of older adults (a large pool of community volunteers) from exposure.</p>

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			<p>The Feeding the Carolinas network typically provides food to 2.6 million North Carolinians facing hunger each year. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to, and already has, significantly increased the number of North Carolinians experiencing food insecurity. It is critical that the State provide Feeding the Carolinas with immediate and flexible funding to allow them to continue to provide food to those who need it.</p> <p>Farmers and Farmers Markets To support our farmers, we ask the State to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with local officials to ensure farmers markets remain open;</li> <li>• allocate additional resources to helping farmers comply with CDC recommendations to ensure the health and safety of farmworkers;</li> <li>• advocate for a federal disaster declaration and do so based on revenue losses rather than production losses;</li> <li>• utilize funds for a Disaster Loss Program similar to the one instituted for losses caused by Hurricanes Michael and Florence, and allow emergency payments to be based on documentation of revenue for farms that do not have crop reports on file with FSA;</li> <li>• buy down interest rates for federal emergency loans;</li> <li>• create no-interest loan pools to cover the interest of FSA emergency loans; and</li> <li>• create bridge loan programs.</li> </ul> <p>Social distancing strategies are necessary to control the spread of this dangerous virus. Small and mid-sized farms that sell directly to consumers, restaurants, and farm-to-school are losing business as a result, pushing many to the edge of failure. The conventional farm safety net does not help these producers or the food hubs and other local food businesses they work with. Meanwhile, thousands of people have been laid off, and the need for emergency support—including food— is growing daily. These farms and businesses can play an important role in ensuring and expanding access to fresh, healthy foods during this public health crisis. But it can't happen without emergency support.</p> <p>SNAP and WIC We request that the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide emergency supplemental SNAP benefits to any participating SNAP household;</li> <li>• provide meal-replacement benefits through SNAP for households with children who would otherwise receive free- or reduced-price meals through P-EBT;</li> <li>• submit any other waiver requests to USDA and take advantage of any flexibility as permitted by future federal relief packages;</li> <li>• take steps and provide funding to implement the Elderly Supplemental Assistance Project (ESAP) as soon as possible.</li> </ul> <p>Nearly 1.3 million North Carolinians receive SNAP. Of those, almost 63% are in families with children and more than 29% are in families with elderly or disabled members. These are also the North Carolinians being most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As businesses continue to close and schools remain shuttered, the number of North Carolinians who qualify for and rely on SNAP and WIC for food will continue to grow. The State must take every step to provide maximum benefits and flexibility and expand access to these critical programs.</p>

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			<p>Child Nutrition Programs</p> <p>Now, more than ever, child nutrition programs across the state are a critical way to ensure our children have access to food. Child nutrition programs are utilizing the seamless summer meal program waiver which allows some flexibility, but the federal funding is inadequate for the cost of food, labor, and transport. Lack of funding necessitates that the programs offer fewer meal sites and methods of delivery and is particularly challenging for rural communities. School closures have also left these programs without income from paid meals, sales of a la carte items, and fee for service opportunities.</p> <p>Access to Care</p> <p>Too many North Carolinians living in the coverage gap will be disproportionately impacted by Covid-19. If they become sick, they will lack insurance to cover their medical costs. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act does not cover treatments, so people living in the coverage gap may be deterred from seeking treatment or face crippling medical bills. Many of those who are uninsured work in public-facing professions, with higher risks of contracting or transmitting the virus. There will also be a greater burden on North Carolina health providers as they work to provide necessary medical treatment without receiving compensation, particularly those in rural areas.</p> <p>Broadband and Access to Technology</p> <p>We ask the State to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amend funding for the GREAT Program to provide \$30 million over 5 years;</li> <li>• pass the FIBER NC Act to remove barriers that prevent or inhibit local governments from partnering with private providers;</li> <li>• ensure all students have access to a computer; and</li> <li>• increase access to technology for small businesses, including farms, who are adjusting to provide virtual services.</li> </ul> <p>High-speed internet is critical now, more than ever, to allow employees to work from home, students to continue their studies, businesses to transition their operations, and patients to receive telemedicine. It is imperative that the State remove barriers that prevent or inhibit local governments from partnering with private providers to bring better service to residents and businesses. The State must allow local governments to accept federal and nonprofit grants to make broadband-related investments, which they cannot receive under current law. These would include grants from the USDA and Golden LEAF Foundation. Additionally, these needs are urgent, so funding is needed immediately to allow this infrastructure to be put into place.</p>
03/27/2020 02:45 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Mrs. Morgan Gramann	<p>I respectfully submit this feedback in response to your request for input on how best to respond with emergency legislative measures to address issues facing families and businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This feedback is submitted on behalf of members and partners of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, a statewide, non-partisan coalition that convenes, mobilizes, supports, and empowers partners to advance equitable policies that reduce health disparities, prevent chronic disease, and promote health.</p> <p>Additional context for our recommendations is attached. In short, we recommend that the</p>

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			<p>State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide an additional \$6 million in immediate funding to every Feeding the Carolinas food bank in North Carolina;</li> <li>• support our farmers by keeping farmers markets open, allocating additional resources to help farmers meet CDC health and safety recommendations, and provide funding for emergency payments;</li> <li>• continue to submit waiver requests to USDA to maximize SNAP and WIC funding and flexibility and take other actions to expand access to SNAP and WIC;</li> <li>• provide funding to child nutrition programs, providing maximum flexibility for the funds to be used to purchase food or for general operational needs;</li> <li>• close the health insurance coverage gap to ensure all North Carolinians have access to care; and</li> <li>• take steps to ensure all North Carolinians have access to broadband and technology allowing them to work or study from home.</li> </ul> <p>Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 919.308.8800 or <a href="mailto:morgan@ncallianceforhealth.org">morgan@ncallianceforhealth.org</a> should you have any questions or need additional information.</p> <p>Thank you for your leadership during this uncertain time.</p> <p>Warmly,</p> <p>Morgan Wittman Gramann Executive Director</p> <p>Feeding the Carolinas Food Banks</p> <p>We ask the State to provide an additional \$6 million in immediate funding to every Feeding the Carolinas food bank in North Carolina. This funding must be flexible to allow food banks to purchase the additional food required to respond to the crisis due to the closing of schools and layoffs caused by the appropriate government required closings. In addition, these funds should help support the management, storage, and transportation of these critical food resources along with additional labor required to manage the additional need and loss of volunteer resources created by required social distancing and the protection of older adults (a large pool of community volunteers) from exposure.</p> <p>The Feeding the Carolinas network typically provides food to 2.6 million North Carolinians facing hunger each year. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to, and already has, significantly increased the number of North Carolinians experiencing food insecurity. It is critical that the State provide Feeding the Carolinas with immediate and flexible funding to allow them to continue to provide food to those who need it.</p> <p>Farmers and Farmers Markets</p> <p>To support our farmers, we ask the State to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with local officials to ensure farmers markets remain open;</li> <li>• allocate additional resources to helping farmers comply with CDC recommendations to ensure the health and safety of farmworkers;</li> </ul>



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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• advocate for a federal disaster declaration and do so based on revenue losses rather than production losses;</li> <li>• utilize funds for a Disaster Loss Program similar to the one instituted for losses caused by Hurricanes Michael and Florence, and allow emergency payments to be based on documentation of revenue for farms that do not have crop reports on file with FSA;</li> <li>• buy down interest rates for federal emergency loans;</li> <li>• create no-interest loan pools to cover the interest of FSA emergency loans; and</li> <li>• create bridge loan programs.</li> </ul> <p>Social distancing strategies are necessary to control the spread of this dangerous virus. Small and mid-sized farms that sell directly to consumers, restaurants, and farm-to-school are losing business as a result, pushing many to the edge of failure. The conventional farm safety net does not help these producers or the food hubs and other local food businesses they work with. Meanwhile, thousands of people have been laid off, and the need for emergency support—including food— is growing daily. These farms and businesses can play an important role in ensuring and expanding access to fresh, healthy foods during this public health crisis. But it can't happen without emergency support.</p> <p>SNAP and WIC We request that the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide emergency supplemental SNAP benefits to any participating SNAP household;</li> <li>• provide meal-replacement benefits through SNAP for households with children who would otherwise receive free- or reduced-price meals through P-EBT;</li> <li>• submit any other waiver requests to USDA and take advantage of any flexibility as permitted by future federal relief packages;</li> <li>• take steps and provide funding to implement the Elderly Supplemental Assistance Project (ESAP) as soon as possible.</li> </ul> <p>Nearly 1.3 million North Carolinians receive SNAP. Of those, almost 63% are in families with children and more than 29% are in families with elderly or disabled members. These are also the North Carolinians being most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. As businesses continue to close and schools remain shuttered, the number of North Carolinians who qualify for and rely on SNAP and WIC for food will continue to grow. The State must take every step to provide maximum benefits and flexibility and expand access to these critical programs.</p> <p>Child Nutrition Programs Now, more than ever, child nutrition programs across the state are a critical way to ensure our children have access to food. Child nutrition programs are utilizing the seamless summer meal program waiver which allows some flexibility, but the federal funding is inadequate for the cost of food, labor, and transport. Lack of funding necessitates that the programs offer fewer meal sites and methods of delivery and is particularly challenging for rural communities. School closures have also left these programs without income from paid meals, sales of a la carte items, and fee for service opportunities.</p> <p>Access to Care Too many North Carolinians living in the coverage gap will be disproportionately impacted</p>

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			<p>by Covid-19. If they become sick, they will lack insurance to cover their medical costs. The Families First Coronavirus Response Act does not cover treatments, so people living in the coverage gap may be deterred from seeking treatment or face crippling medical bills. Many of those who are uninsured work in public-facing professions, with higher risks of contracting or transmitting the virus. There will also be a greater burden on North Carolina health providers as they work to provide necessary medical treatment without receiving compensation, particularly those in rural areas.</p> <p>Broadband and Access to Technology We ask the State to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• amend funding for the GREAT Program to provide \$30 million over 5 years;</li> <li>• pass the FIBER NC Act to remove barriers that prevent or inhibit local governments from partnering with private providers;</li> <li>• ensure all students have access to a computer; and</li> <li>• increase access to technology for small businesses, including farms, who are adjusting to provide virtual services.</li> </ul> <p>High-speed internet is critical now, more than ever, to allow employees to work from home, students to continue their studies, businesses to transition their operations, and patients to receive telemedicine. It is imperative that the State remove barriers that prevent or inhibit local governments from partnering with private providers to bring better service to residents and businesses. The State must allow local governments to accept federal and nonprofit grants to make broadband-related investments, which they cannot receive under current law. These would include grants from the USDA and Golden LEAF Foundation. Additionally, these needs are urgent, so funding is needed immediately to allow this infrastructure to be put into place.</p>
03/27/2020 02:47 PM	Education Working Group	Mrs. Morgan Gramann	<p>I respectfully submit this feedback in response to your request for input on how best to respond with emergency legislative measures to address issues facing families and businesses as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. This feedback is submitted on behalf of members and partners of the North Carolina Alliance for Health, a statewide, non-partisan coalition that convenes, mobilizes, supports, and empowers partners to advance equitable policies that reduce health disparities, prevent chronic disease, and promote health.</p> <p>Additional context for our recommendations is attached. In short, we recommend that the State:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provide an additional \$6 million in immediate funding to every Feeding the Carolinas food bank in North Carolina;</li> <li>• support our farmers by keeping farmers markets open, allocating additional resources to help farmers meet CDC health and safety recommendations, and provide funding for emergency payments;</li> <li>• continue to submit waiver requests to USDA to maximize SNAP and WIC funding and flexibility and take other actions to expand access to SNAP and WIC;</li> <li>• provide funding to child nutrition programs, providing maximum flexibility for the funds to be used to purchase food or for general operational needs;</li> <li>• close the health insurance coverage gap to ensure all North Carolinians have access to care; and</li> </ul>

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			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• take steps to ensure all North Carolinians have access to broadband and technology allowing them to work or study from home.</li> </ul> <p>Please do not hesitate to reach out to me at 919.308.8800 or <a href="mailto:morgan@ncallianceforhealth.org">morgan@ncallianceforhealth.org</a> should you have any questions or need additional information.</p> <p>Thank you for your leadership during this uncertain time.</p> <p>Warmly,</p> <p>Morgan Wittman Gramann Executive Director</p> <p>Feeding the Carolinas Food Banks</p> <p>We ask the State to provide an additional \$6 million in immediate funding to every Feeding the Carolinas food bank in North Carolina. This funding must be flexible to allow food banks to purchase the additional food required to respond to the crisis due to the closing of schools and layoffs caused by the appropriate government required closings. In addition, these funds should help support the management, storage, and transportation of these critical food resources along with additional labor required to manage the additional need and loss of volunteer resources created by required social distancing and the protection of older adults (a large pool of community volunteers) from exposure.</p> <p>The Feeding the Carolinas network typically provides food to 2.6 million North Carolinians facing hunger each year. The COVID-19 pandemic is expected to, and already has, significantly increased the number of North Carolinians experiencing food insecurity. It is critical that the State provide Feeding the Carolinas with immediate and flexible funding to allow them to continue to provide food to those who need it.</p> <p>Farmers and Farmers Markets</p> <p>To support our farmers, we ask the State to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• work with local officials to ensure farmers markets remain open;</li> <li>• allocate additional resources to helping farmers comply with CDC recommendations to ensure the health and safety of farmworkers;</li> <li>• advocate for a federal disaster declaration and do so based on revenue losses rather than production losses;</li> <li>• utilize funds for a Disaster Loss Program similar to the one instituted for losses caused by Hurricanes Michael and Florence, and allow emergency payments to be based on documentation of revenue for farms that do not have crop reports on file with FSA;</li> <li>• buy down interest rates for federal emergency loans;</li> <li>• create no-interest loan pools to cover the interest of FSA emergency loans; and</li> <li>• create bridge loan programs.</li> </ul> <p>Social distancing strategies are necessary to control the spread of this dangerous virus. Small and mid-sized farms that sell directly to consumers, restaurants, and farm-to-school are losing business as a result, pushing many to the edge of failure. The conventional farm</p>

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03/27/2020 02:52 PM	Education Working Group	Ms. Elle Evans Peterson, NCPTA and lead agency for NC Kids for NC Farms coalition	<p>Speaker Tim Moore Chairs Rep. Craig Horn, Rep. John Fraley, &amp; Rep. Ashton Clemmons North Carolina General Assembly 16 West Jones Street Raleigh, NC 27601-1096</p> <p>March 27, 2020</p> <p>RE: Request to include school nutrition services in the proposed COVID-19 response bill</p> <p>Dear Speaker Moore, Chairs and Members of the House Select Committee COVID-19/ Education,</p> <p>The seriousness of COVID-19 requires us all working together to protect our communities, and we support all state and federal measures put in place to contain its impact. Over the last two weeks, North Carolina's K-12 school nutrition teams have once again provided essential nutrition services to families across the state in the midst of an emergency declaration.</p> <p>It is critical that North Carolina's school nutrition services receive emergency support so that they can maintain these core functions throughout this pandemic, and continue to provide nutrition and meals, many in unusual settings. School nutrition staff is already spending countless hours preparing, packaging and delivering meals in some very innovative ways and they are quickly reaching exhaustion levels. We need to provide them with the financial and staffing resources to maintain their robust efforts with this critical service.</p> <p>As you develop guidance for the rapidly-evolving response to COVID-19, we are reaching out to request that your committee make efforts to include emergency funding to support school nutrition services across the state, including funds for food purchases and incremental staffing costs, as well as general operating support to cover the additional costs associated with incorporating CDC recommendations. We request assistance in</p>

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			<p>communicating to the general public the available resources for all families, including locations for free, healthy meals for kids, ages 18 and under across the state.</p> <p>In the event of "shelter in place" mandates related to the Coronavirus response, we urge that any "essential activities" exceptions include engagement in activities or the performance of tasks essential to all school nutrition staff across the state. Specifically, we request that all school nutrition and related staff be considered "essential personnel" and perform essential services so that they may continue to function (even in a limited capacity) in their public health and safety role. Thank you in advance for your consideration of these requests.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>The North Carolina Farms for North Carolina Kids coalition</p> <p>Supporting agencies include NC Parent Teacher Association (NCPTA), North Carolina Alliance for Health, Food Insight Group (FIG), Self Help Credit Union and Carolina Farm Stewardship Association</p>
03/27/2020 02:59 PM	Health Care Working Group	Karen Taylor	<p>Dear House Committee Members,</p> <p>For a number of years now, the state has had the opportunity to provide better care for its citizens by expanding Medicaid. If ever a time has come for you to recognize that your continuing refusal to do so is a mistake of the gravest order, it is now. Rural communities and the working poor suffer most when access to care is restricted due to funding allocations; and the current crisis, the suffering and deaths of vulnerable citizens who cannot access emergency services during this pandemic, should make it clear that the money North Carolina's taxpayers have already paid into this program-- which you have refused to claim -- would make a significant difference in these communities. I can assure you that the people of North Carolina will appreciate your actions, needlessly delayed as they have been.</p>