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

Date Submitted	Category	Name	Comments
04/07/2020 03:02 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Ms. Dena Papazoglou	To the House Select Committee on COVID-19 (Economic Support working group). I urge you to protect all North Carolina workers and communities in the following critical ways:  • provide paid sick days, family leave, and full unemployment benefits for all  • provide economic relief to those most impacted by COVID-19
04/07/2020 03:03 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Dena Papazoglou	To the House Select Committee on COVID-19 (Continuity of State Operations working group): I urge you to make voting more accessible to all voters by:  • making voting by mail more accessible  • increasing public promotion of absentee vote-by-mail option  • ensuring free return mail postage on absentee ballots
04/07/2020 03:05 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr. Joe Bearden	With today's voting debacle in Wisconsin, North Carolina must avoid residents having to choose between their health and voting. NC needs to plan for and fund mail-based voting. As we are learning today there will be moments when in-person voting is impractical and potentially dangerous.
04/07/2020 03:13 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Elizabeth Kawabata	Please do the following to make sure that everyone's vote get counted:  • make voting by mail more accessible  • increase public promotion of absentee vote-by-mail option  • ensure free return mail postage on absentee ballots
04/07/2020 03:17 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Elizabeth Kawabata	These actions are necessary to ensure that we all have an opportunity to vote.  Please protect all North Carolina workers and communities by enacting the following measures:  • provide paid sick days, family leave, and full unemployment benefits for all (Some of the most essential employees in our society do not have these benefits. By taking care of them, we are taking care of everyone.)  • provide economic relief to those most impacted by COVID-19
04/07/2020 03:21 PM	Health Care Working Group	Elizabeth Kawabata	Please support Medicaid expansion in North Carolina. This action will allow over 500,000 North Carolinians to get health coverage who do not earn enough money to pay the premiums.
04/07/2020 03:58 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Lynne Walter, MSW	North Carolina needs mail-in voting NOW. Many other states (such as Oregon) handle all-mail balloting just fine without problems, so there are many well-functioning examples to which we can look for guidance. We need to protect our democracy by allowing people to vote AND we need to protect our public health by severely reducing opportunities for COVID-19 to be transmitted between voters, between poll workers, and between voters and poll workers.
04/07/2020 04:05 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Annie Taft	We should have mail in voting for the entire state. We have no way of knowing what's going to happen in the fall and we may see a second wave of the Coronavirus. We want to make sure that ALL North Carolinians can vote in ALL elections.
04/07/2020 04:30 PM	Economic Support	Reverend Ann	Drastic times demand drastic action. Go to your inner sanctuary and hear God's call to

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	Working Group	Harrington	enable the citizens of this state to have their voting rights guaranteed by instituting internet voting.
04/07/2020 04:45 PM	Health Care Working Group	Ms Cheri DeRosia	I support Medicaid expansion!
04/07/2020 04:47 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Ms. Cheri DeRosia	We should provide economic relief to those most impacted by COVID-19. This should include paid sick days, family leave, and full unemployment benefits for all.
04/07/2020 04:49 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Cheri DeRosia	I support vote by mail! Please increase promotion of the absentee vote-by-mail option and provide free return mail postage on absentee ballots!
04/07/2020 05:32 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Dr. Lynn Lyle	Free and fair elections are a requirement for a democracy. Without them we are subject to corrupt, evil forces in our society.
04/07/2020 05:37 PM	Health Care Working Group	Tara Romano	Our state's failure to expand Medicaid has long been a bad decision, and created unnecessary hardship for hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians who are unable to obtain affordable, quality healthcare. During a public health crisis such as the COVID19 crisis, this failure to expand Medicaid creates even bigger problems (in part because people who don't have regular access to medical care can develop chronic conditions, which can make them more susceptible to severe COVID19 infections). The people of North Carolina need immediate access to healthcare coverage, including Medicaid, so people can get the care they need.  Our front line healthcare workers, medical professionals, and first responders, who are risking their lives everyday under extremely stressful circumstances, need to be properly compensated for what they are doing during this time of crisis. All of these workers should be receiving hazard pay right now (50% on top of their base pay), as well as access to a \$1 million life insurance plan during this crisis. They also need access to appropriate and quality PPE now - as much as they need to keep themselves and their patients safe. I used to work in healthcare, and know that these workers will often put their patient's health and safety above their own. While that is admirable, it is not fair we ask them to shoulder this burden alone. Please make sure they have what they need to protect themselves and their families.
04/07/2020 06:36 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mr Joseph Hasty	We should start the ball rolling for absentee or wholesale voting by mail ASAP.  Mail in voting like Oregon and Washington State.
04/07/2020 07:28 PM	Health Care Working Group	Ms Chris Chato	I strongly support Medicaid expansion, which would allow over 500,000 North Carolinians to get health coverage. Please work hard to get it done.  Thank you.

Economic Support   Working Group	Date Submitted	Category	Name	Comments
O4/07/2020 07:31 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Coroup   O4/07/2020 07:43 PM   Health Care Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:27 PM   Health Care Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:27 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:27 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:27 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group   O4/07/2020 09:44 PM   Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Service	04/07/2020 07:30 PM		Ms Chris Chato	
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Scroup   Basic human need. Conservative states have expanded and we must also.	04/07/2020 07:31 PM	Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working	Ms Chris Chato	<ul> <li>making voting by mail more accessible</li> <li>increasing public promotion of absentee vote-by-mail option</li> </ul>
Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  O4/07/2020 09:44 PM Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  Dr. Lee Nackman Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  Dr. Lee Nackman Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  Dr. Lee Nackman Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  Dr. Lee Nackman Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  Dr. Lee Nackman Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group  Dr. Lee Nackman Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Operations (Emergency Services) And Interest of Elections) Working Interest of Elections (Elections of Elections) Working Interest of Elections (Elections) Working Interest of Elections (Elections) Interest of Elections (Elections) Interest of Elections (Elections) Interest of Elections). This works well and his been in place in most counties of Washington for more than a decade, and was adopted statewide in 2011.  I never once heard any accusations of voter fraud and certainly, when I was there, there were no problems with the system. Interestingly, Washington is like North Carolina in that it has some major cities, some smaller cities, and many rural areas. Because we already have USPS infrastructure in place everywhere, the whole system works well.  Of course, there would be a lot of work to be done in North Carolina to set up such a system, to buy the equipment to scan the ballots and verify that the signatures on the ballots match the signatures taken when the voter registered, and to be able to report results quickly. But, clearly, it can be done and since Washington and several other states have done this successfully we in North Carolina wouldn't need to reinvent the wheel.  Please move quickly to fund and begin implementing a North Carolina vote by	04/07/2020 07:43 PM		Jordan Rogers	
Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety). Working Group  The obvious solution is voting by mail. I lived in Washington State for almost 3 years starting in 2009. Washington holds all elections by mail. There are no polling places. One still has to register ahead of time. Each registered voter receives a ballot in the mail. You fill it out the ballot, seal it in an envelope, sign the outside of the envelope and put it in the mail (one can even save postage by dropping it off in some mailbox-like lock boxes made available by the Board of Elections). This works well and his been in place in most counties of Washington for more than a decade, and was adopted statewide in 2011.  I never once heard any accusations of voter fraud and certainly, when I was there, there were no problems with the system. Interestingly, Washington is like North Carolina in that it has some major cities, some smaller cities, and many rural areas. Because we already have USPS infrastructure in place everywhere, the whole system works well.  Of course, there would be a lot of work to be done in North Carolina to set up such a system, to buy the equipment to scan the ballots and verify that the signatures on the ballots and verify that the signatures taken when the voter registered, and to be able to report results quickly. But, clearly, it can be done and since Washington and several other states have done this successfully, we in North Carolina wouldn't need to reinvent the wheel.  Please move quickly to fund and begin implementing a North Carolina vote by mail	04/07/2020 09:27 PM	Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working	Rabbi John Friedman	to mail in ballots. Security measures can be taken to prevent abuse. Please take this
04/07/2020 10:06 PM Health Care Working Dr. Lee Nackman The number of uninsured and underinsured North Carolinians is going to skyrocket as	04/07/2020 09:44 PM	Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working	Dr. Lee Nackman	risking public safety. It is therefore essential that we begin work now to ensure that all North Carolinians can vote easily and without risk to either themselves or to poll workers. The obvious solution is voting by mail.  No doubt, concerns will be raised about voting by mail. I lived in Washington State for almost 3 years starting in 2009. Washington holds all elections by mail. There are no polling places. One still has to register ahead of time. Each registered voter receives a ballot in the mail. You fill it out the ballot, seal it in an envelope, sign the outside of the envelope and put it in the mail (one can even save postage by dropping it off in some mailbox-like lock boxes made available by the Board of Elections). This works well and his been in place in most counties of Washington for more than a decade, and was adopted statewide in 2011.  I never once heard any accusations of voter fraud and certainly, when I was there, there were no problems with the system. Interestingly, Washington is like North Carolina in that it has some major cities, some smaller cities, and many rural areas. Because we already have USPS infrastructure in place everywhere, the whole system works well.  Of course, there would be a lot of work to be done in North Carolina to set up such a system, to buy the equipment to scan the ballots and verify that the signatures on the ballots match the signatures taken when the voter registered, and to be able to report results quickly. But, clearly, it can be done and since Washington and several other states have done this successfully, we in North Carolina wouldn't need to reinvent the wheel.  Please move quickly to fund and begin implementing a North Carolina vote by mail system. Time is short, but we could do it if we start now and treat this with urgency.
	04/07/2020 10:06 PM	Health Care Working	Dr. Lee Nackman	The number of uninsured and underinsured North Carolinians is going to skyrocket as

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	Group		employment is devastated by COVID-19 public health measures. Even before this crisis, more than 10% of North Carolinians (over a million people) were uninsured. If unemployment goes to 20 or 30%, most of those people will lose the insurance they had through their employment. That could mean that we could have more than two million uninsured North Carolinians. We need to do something and do it fast.
			The obvious step is to expand Medicaid in North Carolina. The Federal government will pay for most of it and we already have a large budget surplus that we could easily use to pay for the small part that North Carolina would have to cover.
			Not only will expanding Medicaid help several million North Carolinians, it will help preserve much of our rural healthcare system, which is under enormous duress. And it will make all of us safer by ensuring that all North Carolinians can get the treatment that they need when they need it without going to the emergency room for non-emergency care.
04/07/2020 10:44 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Voting Concerns Grant Houston	Please vote to allow remote voting by mail this November.
04/07/2020 11:53 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Mrs Jamezetta Bedford	NC needs to fund massive mail-in voting and greatly expand early voting weeks to provide physical distancing so nobody risks their life to exercise their duty to vote. Make it easier for absentee voting by say requiring only one witness. Avoid the WI debacle by allowing a much longer period to accept mailed ballots. Be sure all requests for a mail ballot go out in time to be returned. Provide a backup in case some are not mailed until even election day.
04/08/2020 12:19 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	MS. Melissa Whitten	We must have mail-in voting. Wisconsin was a sin we should never repeat.
04/08/2020 08:02 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Katherine Scott	Having read the State Board of Election's Recommendations to Address Election-Related Issues Affected by COVID-19, released on March 26, I implore the General Assembly to act quickly to put in place all the needed changes to meet each of the recommendations. This public health epidemic is unprecedented in modern memory, and the health and safety of each person in the state, and nation, should be everyone's shared priority. Our ability to work through many months of disruption, including health and financial crises, will depend largely on the abilities of our elected leaders and the policies that they put in place. It has never been more important to secure the voting rights of the citizens of our state, but we must do so guided by health and public safety priorities. I trust that you all will place these imperatives ahead of any personal or partisan biases and do what is necessary for your constituents. Thank you!
04/08/2020 08:11 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working	Ms Nan Nixon	I support the recommendations of Democracy North Carolina, which has submitted a letter to the State Board of Elections with suggestions for election administration responses to the challenges posed by COVID-19. In particular, I strongly support the suggestion to develop contingency plans for moving to an all-mail election and protocols

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	Group		for when such a measure should be taken. We MUST be prepared for a worst-case scenario to protect the integrity of our franchise.
04/08/2020 08:18 AM	Health Care Working Group	Ms. Nan Nixon	Health Care Working Group:
	,		Our NC hospitals, community health centers and families are being stressed in an unprecedented way by COVID-19, and these facilities in our rural communities are exquisitely vulnerable financially. We need care facilities to stay open, and to protect the hundreds of thousands of uninsured and newly unemployed North Carolinians. An emergency bill to expand Medicaid would bring our hard-earned taxpayer dollars back to the state now - when they are most needed. An emergency bill, would also help ensure that when a COVID-19 vaccine is available, everyone can be vaccinated, protecting our population broadly and allowing them to return to work safely.
04/08/2020 08:23 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Ms. Nan Nixon	The ability of North Carolinians to meet their basic needs is under extreme challenge as we reach historic levels of unemployment as a direct impact of the COVID-19 crisis. To address this and avoid confusion, we need to expand the state's unemployment insurance program to improve both how it is offered and how the application process is communicated. Expanding UI will help ensure that unemployment itself does not further exacerbate the public health crisis. When an unemployed citizen cannot afford medical care, they are less likely to seek it, which is very likely to spread the disease among family and community members.
04/08/2020 09:40 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Dr. Renee Coward	We have had increased calls from our clients (families who have child abuse victims in their care) for assistance with food, car payments, and power bill payments. We have had a dramatic drop in referrals from Child Protective Services and law enforcement and have great concern for children who are unable to call out for help to a safe person such as a day care worker, teacher, or guidance counselor. We are continuing tele-mental health for our current counseling clients, but recognize that some areas in Western North Carolina have little or no wifi service, for example the Tuckaseegee area on Hwy 107 South. There are county parks that are installing wifi boosters, but they have also closed the public restrooms there, so we are concerned about hygiene issues for families with children. Thank you.
04/08/2020 10:52 AM	Health Care Working Group	Vote by Mail Diane Rodelli	After the reckless decision of the court in Wisconsin to insist on having their primary during a stay at home order, I am hopeful that NC will ensure all its citizens that we can 1. Vote by mail/absentee ballot, 2. Have enough time given for the distribution of those ballots to ensure they count!  This is a national health crisis, but it should not infect our democracy and the most primary of rights- the right to vote without risking you life!!!
04/08/2020 11:11 AM	Health Care Working Group	Lucy Lewis	As North Carolinians struggle to deal with the Covid19 pandemic, it is critically important that our state expand Medicaid. The vast majority of these costs are already covered by the federal government, and it would provide health coverage for thousands of our state's poorest and neediest residents. I urge you to work for this expansion. We need to protect the health of ALL North Carolinians, now more than ever. Thank you.
04/08/2020 11:22 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections &	Ms. Nan Nixon	Published reports indicate that in North Carolina, cases of COVID-19 are beginning to spread throughout the federal prison system and in other institutions, such as nursing homes. Public health officials have also gone on record, registering their concern with the

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Date Submitted	Public Safety) Working Group	Name	risks posed by accelerating spread in facilities to vulnerable individuals and the community beyond.  "In North Carolina, the first COVID-19 case at a federal prison was reported March 27 in Butner and involved a staff member. Less than a week later, 10 inmates tested positive for the virus at the same facility." - NC Policy Watch, PW special report, Part Two: COVID-19 pandemic poses dire threat to NC prisons and jails, April 3, 2020.  Given these risks, it is imperative that legislation is passed to ensure emergency funding where needed to protect incarcerated and other institutionalized individuals and the staff that support them. In particular the safety of vulnerable individuals, including pregnant women, minors and those with suppressed immune systems should be prioritized.
04/08/2020 11:42 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Donald Bryson	Donald Bryson, president and CEO of the Civitas Institute  Keeping agriculture going despite coronavirus  A few simple steps can aid North Carolina farmers:
			<ul> <li>Keep open all farmers markets should remain open statewide, and local governments should waive municipal restrictions</li> <li>Match the temporarily unemployed workers with farmers to address an acute farm labor shortage in North Carolina</li> <li>Adopt the Small Dairy Sustainability Act (House Bill 103)</li> </ul>
			One thing for which we should all be thankful for during the coronavirus pandemic is that our agricultural production and distribution system has continued to perform well so far. However, the virus' impact on some agricultural sectors could cause disruptions. These range from "food protectionism" (national governments hoarding food) to a potential drop in demand for American agricultural exports.
			While some of the problems concerning North Carolina's agricultural industry are beyond the scope of what the state government can (or should) do, there are actions the state can take to help farmers.
			Support farmers markets Gov. Roy Cooper was correct to put farmers markets in the same essential category as grocery stores in his March 27 stay-at-home order, either directly noting agricultural business or referencing the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency's list of critical infrastructure sectors.
			Most farmers markets across the state have remained open. However, local governments have the authority under current rules to impose stricter stay-at-home orders, which can include agriculture infrastructure. Durham closed its farmers market two weeks ago, and, as coronavirus continues to spread over the next few weeks, other local governments may be tempted to follow Durham's lead.
			Most goods sold at farmers markets are locally produced, and many farmers depend on the income they earn there. Given the open-air nature of many farmers markets, they are at

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least as safe an option for food shopping as grocery stores - if social distancing is maintained. As such, the General Assembly should prevent local governments from shutting down farmers markets while grocery stores are still open.

Gov. Cooper or the General Assembly should go a step further and urge counties and municipalities to waive restrictions temporarily on roadside, or "pop-up," farm stands. Doing so will increase the supply of fresh dairy, fruits, vegetables, and meat.

Dealing with an anticipated farm labor shortage

Being able to sell their products does not help farmers if they cannot get their crops out of the field. A shortage of farm laborers has impacted North Carolina farmers for the past several years. One way they have addressed that need is through the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Labor Program. In 2019, the US Department of Labor approved 21,605 H-2A farm laborer certifications for North Carolina farmers, the fifth-highest number of any state.

In addition to the chronic labor shortage, North Carolina farmers must now deal with a new and acute shock to the farm labor market. Two weeks ago, the US Embassy in Mexico (the largest source of temporary agricultural workers) halted interviews for H-2A visas as part of an attempt to reduce coronavirus transmission risks. While the federal government is trying to address the problem, harvesting in Florida has already been disrupted by the shortage.

North Carolina is also dealing with a huge number of the temporarily unemployed from coronavirus-related business closures. The economic disruption of those closures means that we will likely have elevated numbers of unemployed for months after all businesses are allowed to reopen.

That suggests at least a partial solution to both problems. The NC Department of Commerce's Division of Employment Security (which handles unemployment insurance in North Carolina) should work with the NC Department of Agriculture to develop an online farm employment portal and promote it both to the unemployed and agricultural employers. A similar system is currently under consideration in New York, and the French National Federation of Farmers' Union has already set up a similar online portal as France deals with its own coronavirus-related farm labor shortage.

Farm work is physically demanding, and farmers often have a hard time keeping workers, even in times of high unemployment, so this would not completely solve farmers' labor shortage problems. However, matching farmers with people looking for short-term work could help to reduce the number of crops rotting in the field significantly.

## Adopt Small Dairy Sustainability Act

COVID-19 has exposed supply and sourcing problems in retail markets. The two-way strain can be seen through several reports of dairy farmers being told to dump their supply at the same time that North Carolina grocers are rationing gallons of milk.

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			While not a silver bullet, the Small Dairy Sustainability Act (House Bill 103), would provide a secondary supply and market for North Carolina dairy farmers through the sale of raw milk. If passed, North Carolina would join 30 other states that allow for the purchase of raw milk. The rules in other states vary from retail sales out of stores (such as in Pennsylvania and South Carolina) to direct farm-to-consumer sales (such as in Illinois and Texas).
			Current state law only allows for citizens to consume raw milk if they own part or all of a dairy herd. While herd shares are a recent improvement to state law, we can go a step further to provide fresh food to North Carolina families.
			Conclusion Coronavirus is highlighting food uncertainty in North Carolina. Reliance on antiquated supply chains and state restrictions are preventing many North Carolinians from having access to fresh food. There is an abundant supply of food in the Tar Heel State, and its farmers are ready to meet the challenge. The priority should be to remove barriers between consumers and North Carolina farms.
04/08/2020 11:51 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Elizabeth Paley	Don't let North Carolina be another Wisconsin; we should not have to choose between our health and our vote. Please plan now so that out state is prepared for voting absentee/mail-in in November.
04/08/2020 12:02 PM	Education Working Group	Ms. Pat McGlaughlin	We need mail in voting! Look at how well it works in Oregon.
04/08/2020 12:48 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		I am in favor of mail-in voting.
04/08/2020 12:49 PM	Health Care Working Group		I am in favor of Medicaid expansion.
04/08/2020 01:00 PM	Health Care Working Group	President Frances Messer	Senior Living Needs Financial and Other Assistance to Address COVID-19 among High-Risk Residents  • Senior Living Industry in North Carolina: Statewide, the Senior Living industry operates congregate housing for over thirty thousand elderly, often frail residents, generally in one thousand two hundred, assisted living and memory care, the industry is primarily smaller operators: nationwide, 90% operate 5 or fewer communities. The industry generally operates on a private-pay model subject to state regulation (and not the federal HHS or CMS agencies). Senior living communities are not nursing homes, which are funded primarily through federal reimbursement and are federally regulated. Due to this regulatory and payor framework, financial and other assistance directed to traditional healthcare providers (hospitals and nursing homes) likely will not address our industry's needs.
			importance of industry Response. Nearly 100% of the industry's residents are at high

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risk to develop severe COVID-19 if contracted. The industry's average resident age is >80, many with chronic conditions and Alzheimer's and other dementias. The rate of COVID-related hospitalization of this population is drastically higher than other age groups. The fatality rate is around 20% (and likely higher among dementia-care residents). The industry's dedicated, passionate employees in North Carolina are trained in disease prevention and control protocol, and those efforts continue to prove successful to lessen risks for seniors. The state's hospital systems will depend on our industry's continued success serving on the front-line of disease prevention and control, to lessen the impact on hospital capacity. Once seniors are discharged, healthcare systems will continue to call on the industry's operators to take discharges requiring ongoing home care by trained staff.

- Significant Financial Pressures: Senior living operators are now experiencing accelerating revenue pressure while COVID-19 costs simultaneously accelerate. This industry operates on thin margins, has generally experienced losses or low profitability, and additional costs cannot be passed to seniors on fixed incomes. Many communities have voluntarily banned or severely limited new admissions to prevent further spread, which may continue after general distancing guidelines, are relaxed, given the at-risk population. Revenue pressures will quickly escalate as ordinary attrition lowers occupancy without new move-ins. Operators are seeing never-seen staffing pressures and supply costs to combat COVID-19. Mounting expenses include increased preventative and infection control staffing; increased wages (e.g., hazard pay incentives); use of agency labor at elevated rates; increased paid time off and child care costs to enable staff to work; increased PPE, cleaning, and other supply costs; and community cleaning and sanitizing costs. The industry expects to quickly incur increased liability and workers compensation insurance costs and, in some cases, costs of evacuation and relocation, not unlike hurricane and wildfire disasters.
- Areas for Assistance: Our industry needs specific assistance from the state for its COVID-19 response, including:
- ? Reimbursement for Disease Prevention and Control Costs. Our industry's communities have incurred and will continue to incur significant incremental costs related to COVID-19 response, including:
- ? Costs to clean and sanitize facilities in anticipation of, or following, suspected COVID-19 cases.
- ? Labor-related costs, such as increased staffing, overtime, use of agency labor at elevated rates, paid time off, and child care reimbursement.
- ? Supply costs, such as acquiring personal protective equipment (PPE), thermometers, and cleaning supplies.
- ? Provision and Prioritization of Supplies. Senior living communities should receive provision and prioritization at the same level as hospitals of personal protective equipment (PPE) to ensure containment and safety among residents and employees

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			(respirators, facemasks, eye protection, gowns, and gloves).  ? Funding for and Prioritization of On-Site Testing. Even as distancing guidelines are relaxed, the industry may be impacted by longer periods of reduced visitation and admissions. Funding for, and prioritizing availability of, quickly administered and verified on-site testing for COVID-19 could allow an earlier return to ordinary operations, in turn mitigating the financial impact and protecting seniors. Emergent technologies offer 5-minute test results, which would greatly benefit community disease prevention.  North Carolina Assisted Living Association 3392 Six Forks Road Raleigh, NC 27609  www.ncala.org info@ncala.org
04/08/2020 01:16 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Bernadette Chasteen	Please don't let us make Wisconsin's mistake.
04/08/2020 01:58 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Dr. BRICCA SWEET	Please do everything possible to make it as simple and as accessible to vote-by-mail as you possible can. It is vital to encourage safe voting in 2020!
04/08/2020 02:06 PM	Health Care Working Group	David Baker	This crisis demonstrates the value of broad health care accessibility. I urge you to expand Medicare so that many more North Carolinians will have adequate medical care.