

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

Date Submitted	Category	Name	Comments
05/12/2020 10:09 AM	Education Working Group	Scott Crew	<p>I would like to provide feedback regarding the recent school scheduling change from August 31 to August 17.</p> <p>As you know, many families (including ours) routinely schedule vacations for the last week of summer. In our case, we have already planned and paid for a vacation the week of August 24th. We now have to make the difficult decision of forfeiting \$2000 in non-refundable fees and payments or pulling our two children out the second week of school. I imagine that a lot of families are in the same boat as us. Cutting out two weeks of summer vacation will also have a very negative impact to the tourism industry which is already struggling. Another consideration is for summer camps, many of which are run by non-profits and employee teenagers and young adults, who will be relying on that extra two weeks of income.</p> <p>Although no one is sure what the next couple of months will entail, the move from August 31 to August 17 will interfere with vacations, tourism, employment and summer camps. This decision seemed to be short sighted with no consideration for the actual real-world effects. I strongly urge you to reconsider this change. I understand that there are concerns with getting children back into school as much as possible, however given that schools have been closed since mid-March an extra two weeks is not going to make any difference.</p>
05/12/2020 12:28 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Reopen NC	1Million North Carolinians are out of work. We don't want government printed money! We can open safely and quickly!
05/12/2020 12:44 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Keep NC closed Jack Brannan	Keep the state of NC closed, retail stores are not a necessity. We need huge amounts of testing before we can reopen
05/12/2020 02:34 PM	Health Care Working Group	Dr. Kaari Snook	Thank you for all you do to keep the people of North Carolina safe and protected.
05/12/2020 02:39 PM	Health Care Working Group	Tania Gonzalez	Although I support Governor Cooper opening NC in controlled stages - I cannot understand why there are not more stringent regulations in place regarding social distancing in stores, businesses, wearing of masks, etc... This is NOT happening in the majority of establishments. Nor is limiting the amount of people in businesses. I strongly urge my NC government officials to put more stringent regulations in place regarding safe practices. In addition, I hope that the number of people infected and dying are being closely examined before we proceed to Stage 2 of reopening NC. As everyone is well aware - it is STILL difficult to get a test in most places. People with minor symptoms are STILL being told to stay home, do not go to a doctor and do not get tested. So we have no idea how many people in NC truly have Covid19 unless they're very ill. These people who are not very ill, cannot get tested ... may be passing this virus on.
05/12/2020 03:19 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Mrs. Rachelle Salo	Please prepare for increased vote by mail as we move towards November. The necessity of providing a safe way for everyone to participate in the election should be paramount.

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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		Provide better security at ballot collection centers in county BOE. Do not shame our state again with the election fraud that occurred in 2016/2018 CD09. We will be watching.
05/12/2020 05:27 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Jessica Theiss	It is time to reopen safely in order to take care of all of our citizens. People need to work to provide for their families. Mental health matters, too.
05/12/2020 06:51 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Rachel Campbell	We need support for all working groups who are forced to work for our health and safety, also better sources for learning at home. Their lives are important and they need hazard pay for having to put their lives at risk each and every day for us.
05/12/2020 07:00 PM	Education Working Group	Masks at schools and coll Benita Powell	Make sure students and employees are required to wear masks. This will prevent students and employees from getting the virus and sharing it with their vulnerable caregivers or families. Masks should not be an option. They should be required.
05/12/2020 07:10 PM	Education Working Group	Funding for HBCUs/ Tribals Brenda Gwynn	Ensure funding and start a task force for HBCUs/Tribal institutions that do not have funding to afford for students not to live on campus. They are in a hard place with a high percentage of employees who are in high risk populations. Telework may be the best option, but they would lose a lot of funding and students may not choose to attend because they can't live on campus. A task force for the state's HBCUs might be useful to help prevent the disease from spreading and continuing to decimate the brown citizens.
05/13/2020 01:00 AM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms. Bri Betzag	Vote against mandatory vaccinations and masks. Vote against increased welfare, food stamps and unemployment. Vote and fully reopen NC asap and let the people work for themselves.
05/13/2020 08:11 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Kate Rauhauser-Smith	<p>Please, as a resident of this state, a mother, grandmother, and concerned neighbor, I beg you to follow sound medical and scientific guidance when setting policies or when considering how we move forward as individual communities and as a state in total. The Reopen crowd is loud and visible, I get that. Too many of them are behaving recklessly in order to make their point.</p> <p>Those of us, the many thousands of us, who are working within responsible guidelines, helping our employers, neighbors, communities, and families to find workable solutions to the very real challenges caused by shelter in place may not get as much attention but we are here. We 'want our lives back' as much as anyone but we want that to be achieved responsibly and sustainably without the chaos and appalling lack of concern for the most basic truths of infectious disease transmission and impact seen from those who agitate immediate and unrestricted opening.</p> <p>Please, in all respect, for the sake of everyone, base policy decisions on science so my family will be able to thrive in this place for another generation.</p>
05/13/2020 10:08 AM	Economic Support Working Group		Not opening up is has the nothing to do with inconvenience, it has to do the humans beings and their livelihoods being stripped away from the government and all the support businesses that go along with it.
05/13/2020 11:04 AM	Economic Support	A Matter of Life & Death	Dear Members of the Committee,

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	Working Group	Shannon McCarthy	<p>I'm a self-employed hairstylist, so I presently have an income of \$0. I applied for unemployment on March 20th and am still waiting. The PPP loan and gift certificate purchases by my clients are keeping me afloat at the moment. When this is over I will owe it all back.</p> <p>I also know that scientists, doctors, people in places that have had big spikes in the virus, and simple logic, math, and critical thought are ALL telling us how irresponsible and unsafe it would be to reopen right now. That doing so WILL lead to an increase in cases, deaths, and strain on the hospitals. No matter how much I am struggling financially through this, if there is even a 1% chance that those experts are correct, I cannot comprehend why we would possibly even consider reopening anything non-essential right now. It makes my stomach churn to think of it.</p> <p>If NC reopens salons I will lose my eligibility for relief, and I will have TONS of pressure from my clients (and finances) to return to work. Worse, I will have to choose between going back knowing that there is a very strong chance that could contribute to the spread of the virus, and standing up for what I know to be right and losing clients and rapidly going more broke, which could absolutely lead to the loss of my previously-flourishing business and livelihood.</p> <p>But that is what I would have to do, I'm afraid. Because it is the RIGHT thing to do.</p> <p>Is everyone pushing to reopen really SO SURE (like 150% sure) that doing so won't lead to increased illness and death that they feel confident moving forward and reopening? From what data could that conclusion possibly be drawn? And if they don't feel sure, are they really just willing to risk it? To be the potential cause of people getting sick and dying? Could they live with themselves if they were? I can't understand how either of these things can be true. It feels like all critical thought and all compassion for humanity have been abandoned. Or maybe we're just seeing mass national denial?</p> <p>Whatever it is, I implore North Carolina government officials to act from that place of critical thought and compassion that we so desperately need for the well being of our country and community.</p> <p>Please wait. If you believe there is even the slightest, tiniest chance that reopening could increase the spread of Covid-19, then act accordingly. I cannot stand to think that our government would willfully send people back when it's an actual matter of life and death.</p> <p>If we open now, More. People. Will. Die.</p> <p>And I'm going to have to possibly tank my business to stand up for that if I don't have the support of my government.</p> <p>Please do the right thing by humanity.</p> <p>Thank you,</p>

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			Shannon McCarthy Owner/Stylist Studio Flourish Salon
05/13/2020 11:35 AM	Education Working Group	Jessica Trotman	<p>The data does not support a safe way to reopen schools this fall. Please support improved and expanded remote learning and socially distanced opportunities for limited interaction for students to have with the peers and their teachers.</p> <p>Ideally all students could stay home, but if not, then maybe students who are able to participate in remote learning should continue to do this in order to reduce the number of students in the classroom. I understand this may not be the most equitable solution, but undoubtedly all options must be on the table to find a create solution to support students progress.</p> <p>We're all in this together and need to protect our children and families. Reopening schools prematurely will only prolong this crisis.</p> <p>Sincerely, Jessica Trotman, MSEH Mother of two school-age children</p>
05/13/2020 11:37 AM	Economic Support Working Group	Mrs. Martha Cutler	We need continued and better support for people that are stay at home. Small businesses and working people. This is why people are feeling an urgency to open up when we should not be. Because they do not have the economic support they need. Thank you
05/13/2020 12:20 PM	Education Working Group	Ms. Pamela Criswell	<p>Hello,</p> <p>If we are to make preparations for school for the 2020-21 school year to be non-traditonal (possibly having extended remote instruction), what plans are being made to insure that all children AND teachers have equitable access to technology to allow for intentional engagement by all parties? Also, will there be a mandate to offer programs to address social emotional (trauma) support prior to buildings being reopened for instruction? Thank you.</p>
05/14/2020 09:32 AM	Health Care Working Group	Ms Carolyn Mayo	Fatalities for minorities have increased due to Covid 19. However, the health disparities for minorities in NC increases the probability of a minority contracting Covid 19 and possible death. Will the GA consider addressing health disparities during the pandemic?
05/14/2020 01:09 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Ms Carolina Candelaria	Thank you for all your work in this time of crisis to maintain the workings of our state, protecting the health of our citizens while ensuring the safety of our most important civil right to democratic processes and fair access to participation in our upcoming election. I expect to take advantage of our absentee ballot option in the upcoming 2020 election and hope you will pass legislation with the means to use part of the COVID 19 emergency federal funding to help bolster our current state board of elections to handle the increased Absentee ballot Vote by mail demand in NC and to have our state purchase postage paid envelopes to support our USPS. God bless and Keep yourselves safe. Carolina Candelaria
05/14/2020 02:00 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency	Lynne Blanchard	I am asking that you find a way to escalate the reopening of NC, similar to what Wisconsin was able to accomplish. It is time for drastic measures to get people back to work. As

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	Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group		<p>well, the mask requirement of employees needs to be left up to the businesses. They are extremely uncomfortable for the employees to wear them and not be able to breathe in fresh oxygen for 8 hour shifts. There are doctors who believe it is bad for ones health to breathe CO2 waste all day. People are getting headaches and damaged immune systems. It is a false sense of security and completely unnecessary.</p> <p>I would also like you to pursue the alarming reports about neglect and mistreatment of elderly in NC nursing homes. Nurses forbidden from wearing masks even when the virus had peaked. Families not informed when their loved ones tested positive or became sick. Incidents of CV+ patients being moved into facilities with uninfected but vulnerable residents. Hospitals are empty. They need to be cared for there. What is going on? Over half the deaths in this state are in nursing homes so we are failing to protect the most vulnerable. The governor seems unconcerned.</p> <p>Please find a way to open the state. It's clear now that we'll have sustained economic damage for years. Let people go back to work, stop the limitations. Open the state fully. Do not let Cooper's political ambitions harm generations of people. Please. Please contact me at lablanchard0312@gmail.com if you want links to article about the nursing home crisis that is largely unreported.</p>
05/14/2020 02:55 PM	Education Working Group	Jessica Graber	<p>As school districts prepare for the return of staff and students in the fall it is imperative that this committee considers not only de-densifying classrooms, or sanitizing surfaces, but also provision of financial resources for school districts to do assessments of existing facility infrastructure to ensure the building is performing in a manner that will reduce the spread of infectious aerosols. Facility assessments and necessary modifications can be made to prevent or slow the spread of COVID-19, Flu Virus and other viruses and bacteria as well as mold that cause illness and respiratory issues. There are modifications to HVAC Systems that can certainly slow the spread of infectious aerolsols. Some measures do cost money, such as use of UV Light in HVAC systems. However, UV light, with proper dosage, can kill 90% of flu viruses and an even greater rate of success for COVID-19. There are many additional, less costly, system modifications than UV light that are also effective in slowing the spread of infectious diseases. The first step is to have the buildings assessed and recommendations made to create a healthier, safer learning and work environment. People can sanitize desks, door knobs, and floors 24/7 - but if the HVAC system and infrastructure is not assessed to ensure that a healthy amount of outside air is introduced or to ensure that humidity levels are where they should be or the pressure and air flow are optimal, then all the sanitizing will have minimal effect on creating a healthy building environment and preventing the spread of infectious aerosols like flu and COVID-19 viruses. There will never be zero risk for spreading viruses and bacteria, but the risk can certainly be minimized drastically if the system infrastructure is performing in a manner that adds to the defense against spread of infectious aerosols. Consider implementing standard operating procedures that include infrastructure assessment to ensure the HVAC systems and controls are doing everything they can do to help create a healthier, safer environment. Water quality is another focus area for assessment after buildings have sat unused for such a long period of time. The cost is time and some use of additional energy and water which is in opposition to many recent energy efficiency and sustainabiity measures; however, the cost of ignoring these factors</p>

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			will be much greater than the increased energy costs or water bills or the cost of time/ resources to make the buildings safe.
05/14/2020 10:27 PM	Continuity of State Operations (Emergency Services, Elections & Public Safety) Working Group	Lou Davis	We need to have a plan in place for voting by mail. The virus may get worse in the fall and everyone must have the chance to vote. Older people and people in poor health need to be able to vote and not get exposed to illness. Other states have been voting by mail for years and it works well. No evidence of fraud.
05/15/2020 03:05 PM	Economic Support Working Group	Julia Horan	Our granddaughter was laid off March 7 due to Covid19 and applied for unemployment March 15. Her claim was denied. To date she has talked to one help desk person who said they could not help her and would have a supervisor call her about the problem with her account. We have been calling everyday and have not gotten in touch with a counselor. She began to get money from the Pandemic Fund in May. But as many other people her bills have fallen behind and she needs the funds she was denied.
05/17/2020 02:06 PM	Health Care Working Group	Mrs Linda Schiff	<p>I would like you to seriously consider changing the policy for phase 2 and allow 1 visitor per patient who is admitted to the hospital, specifically those patients with dementia or mentally impaired.</p> <p>My mom is 90, has dementia, and broke her hip, which required surgery. I was only allowed to see her for 24 hours after her surgery. When I explained I had to leave and couldn't come back, she became upset, agitated, and very confused.</p> <p>Being in a strange place, receiving pain medication, along with dementia, is very frightening and confusing. Not being able to see a familiar face and being with the one you most depend on can be traumatic in the hospital. She has special needs and attention, which staff cannot always provide. She doesn't know enough to call for help, or how, needs help eating, etc.</p> <p>I fear she will not fare well without my support and help. My being there would alleviate her fear and angst, my fears, and would help alleviate the extra burden on the staff.</p> <p>I believe a 90year old woman with dementia, needs to be cared for as a child would, and the support from a loved one would help ensure a much better outcome.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration in this matter.</p>