



## Washington State Legislature

April 2, 2020

The Honorable Governor Jay Inslee  
Office of the Governor  
P.O. Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

### ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Governor Inslee:

We are in unprecedented and unsettling times as we confront the health and economic crisis caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. You have had to make difficult decisions during this crisis, and we respect the enormity of your orders. As state lawmakers, we are doing our best to understand and explain these orders, and help our constituents navigate the impacts on their lives.

Never has it been more important for all levels of government to work closely together, speak clearly and serve the people – including federal, state and local governments. However, government entities cannot do it alone. We need a comprehensive, all-hands-on-deck approach. We know the public sector, private sector, non-profits, faith-based organizations and volunteers all need to work closely together to be a part of a unified effort to provide solutions.

Faith-based organizations are uniquely positioned and qualified to help fill the gaps in providing these solutions. This includes helping those most in need, including the spiritual, mental health and financial needs of thousands of individuals and families across our state. As people feel more isolated and health and financial concerns intensify in the upcoming days, the critical needs of Washingtonians will grow exponentially.

Your “Stay Home, Stay Healthy” order on March 23 did not designate faith-based organizations as a critical sector (essential workforce) to protect the health and well-being of all Washingtonians. **While we appreciate you provided clarification that it is permissible for a few people to broadcast or livestream religious services, we would like additional clarification.** For example, how many people are permitted to assist with these broadcasts? Further, are faith-based organizations allowed to also have their regular worship bands play together, in addition to people assisting with the broadcast, if they abide by social-distancing rules? You provided guidance in your order, under “Other community-based government operations and essential functions,” when you said: “Artists and musicians providing services through streaming or other technology.”

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**We also respectfully ask that you amend your order and designate faith-based organizations as a critical sector (essential workforce).** You have kept an open mind, listened and provided additional guidance on matters relating to funerals and real estate transactions. We appreciate these further considerations and actions.

In making this request, we are not suggesting faith-based organizations should host mass gatherings or engage in any activities that would threaten public safety and health. We acknowledge the safety and health of all Washingtonians continues to be the most paramount responsibility of everyone in this time of crisis.

**What we are advocating for is that faith-based organizations be allowed to have a limited number of staff in their facilities (as necessary) to answer phones, respond to emails, meet with people in crisis, and deliver necessary items such as food, clothing and financial assistance to those in need** – while adhering to social distancing and other necessary precautions to prevent the spread of the coronavirus (COVID-19).

The responsibility of faith-based organizations to adhere to safety and health precautions would be no different than what is expected of other critical sectors (essential workforces). You have entrusted our restaurants and grocery stores with these precautions as they interface and meet the food and personal needs of Washingtonians. You have entrusted our educational community with these precautions as they interact with and meet the food, childcare and educational needs of our students. We believe you can also trust our faith-based organizations as they interface with and meet the spiritual, mental health and financial needs of Washingtonians.

Governor Inslee, these faith-based organizations are praying for your health, well-being, strength and wisdom in these trying times. They are there for you. Please let them know you are there for them.

By designating faith-based organizations a critical sector (essential workforce), you will unleash the goodwill of Washingtonians and help fill the gaps left by the public and private sectors. These gaps and hardships will only widen over the upcoming days and weeks if we don't do something now to prevent them.

Thank you for the consideration.

Sincerely,



Representative Vicki Kraft  
17<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Senator Lynda Wilson  
17<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Andrew Barkis  
2<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District



Representative Matt Boehnke  
8<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



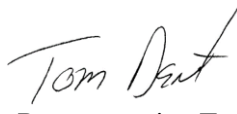
Representative Michelle Caldier  
26<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Kelly Chambers  
25<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Mike Chapman  
24<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Tom Dent  
13<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Mary Dye  
9<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Carolyn Eslick  
39<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Senator Phil Fortunato  
31<sup>st</sup> Legislative District



Representative Keith Goehner  
12<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



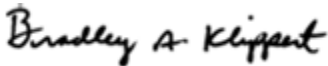
Representative Jenny Graham  
6<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Senator Jim Honeyford  
15<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Bill Jenkin  
16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Brad Klippert  
8<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Joel Kretz  
7<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Bob McCaslin  
4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Gina Mosbrucker  
14<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Ed Orcutt  
20<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Senator Mike Padden  
4<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

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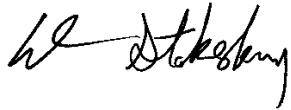
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16<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Joe Schmick  
9<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Norma Smith  
10<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Drew Stokesbary  
31<sup>st</sup> Legislative District



Representative Robert Sutherland  
39<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Representative Luanne Van Werven  
42<sup>nd</sup> Legislative District



Representative Brandon Vick  
18<sup>th</sup> Legislative District



Senator Judy Warnick  
13<sup>th</sup> Legislative District

CC: Drew Shirk, Executive Director, Legislative Affairs