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Congress of the United States  
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EDUCATION AND LABOR  
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COMMITTEE ON FINANCIAL SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

The Honorable Phil Berger  
Senate President Pro Tempore  
North Carolina General Assembly  
16 West Jones Street, Room 2007  
Raleigh, NC 27601

The Honorable Tim Moore  
Speaker of the House  
North Carolina General Assembly  
16 West Jones Street, Room 2304  
Raleigh, NC 27601

Dear President Pro Tempore Berger and Speaker Moore,

I write today to urge you to jointly convene a Special Session of the North Carolina General Assembly to address the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 novel coronavirus pandemic. As you know, the flexibility of Special Sessions offers the benefit of allowing lawmakers to respond to world events, natural and economic disasters, and emerging trends in real time.

I was honored to serve the people of North Carolina in the General Assembly for twenty years. I have no doubt that they are resilient, and that they will rise to the challenge that this public health emergency presents. However, in my nearly four decades of public service, North Carolina has never faced a challenge as great as this, particularly if this disease is not properly managed. President Trump has called on all political leaders to engage in bipartisanship and come together to confront the coronavirus pandemic. The coronavirus is a life or death crisis, not a partisan crisis.

It is my responsibility and honor to lend my support to help citizens in North Carolina in times of individual and family crises and to continue to promote economic and social mobility within the 12<sup>th</sup> Congressional District and across our state. During this public health crisis, we must assist every resident in taking preventative measures. I will continue to work in Congress to support and pass legislation that will swiftly address this crisis and save lives in Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, and across the country.

However, there is work that can be done at home in the Old North State. We already have identified over 10 confirmed cases of the coronavirus in North Carolina. The threat is here and must be addressed faster than the usual speed of government. While Governor Cooper correctly declared a state of emergency and has acted swiftly to address the crisis, a special session of the North Carolina General Assembly could improve our public health resilience by:

- **Suspending utility disconnections and reconnecting affected households:** The Centers for Disease Control recommends hand-washing as the number-one preventive measure to limit the spread of disease. With the recognition that hygiene is a public health priority,

now more than ever, **the State of North Carolina should work with our public utilities to reconnect or restore water service for residents and suspend disconnections for 90 days.** This is not a unique idea. The City of Detroit has released a “Coronavirus COVID-19 Water Restart Plan” in which the State of Michigan pays their \$25 reactivation fee and resumes service at no fee to the customer. Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms of Atlanta has halted disconnections for 60 days. Other states and cities are considering this plan across the nation.

- **Suspending foreclosures and evictions and/or providing mortgage and rental assistance:** Due to the likely economic impacts of this virus, many individuals and families are expected to experience cash flow issues. They should not be forced to leave their houses, especially if they are self-quarantining or are under isolation. **The State of North Carolina should work with lenders, landlords and local authorities to suspend foreclosures and evictions for 90 days, as well as investigate ways to provide mortgage and rental assistance.**
- **Protecting the uninsured and expanding Medicaid:** Insuring as many people as possible is vital during a public health crisis. Medicaid is our nation’s single largest healthcare first responder, and unlike traditional insurance, which depends on specific enrollment periods to avoid adverse selection, people can enroll in Medicaid whenever health care is needed. Moreover, state Medicaid programs can rapidly scale up benefits and adjust normal cost-sharing rules when conditions demand it. Citizens should not be afraid to seek medical attention if they cannot afford it. Although the Trump Administration has committed to removing barriers to testing, the costs of treatment still fall upon our citizens. The financial solvency of our private and public health infrastructure depends on this. **The State of North Carolina should expand Medicaid.**
- **Providing emergency food assistance:** Likely economic disruptions should not exacerbate the hunger crisis faced by hundreds of thousands of North Carolinians, including seniors, children, and students. **The State of North Carolina should maximize all options available under the Food and Nutrition Act for states in managing Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) caseloads and Child Nutrition programs,** including allowing the Governor to apply for waivers for Able Bodied Adults without Dependents by repealing S.L. 2015-294. This ban hampers our state’s ability to use SNAP to ease widespread joblessness and hunger, particularly in times of economic recession. Additionally, the State should work with food bank partners to address needs that are not met by the easing of rules and restrictions for SNAP and Child Nutrition programs.
- **Contingency planning for nursing homes and other vulnerable population centers:** We must plan for this and future outbreaks. Nursing homes and long-term care facilities contain large concentrations of our most vulnerable populations. **The State of North Carolina should ensure, in consultation with the appropriate stakeholders, that all of our long-term facilities have emergency contingency plans in place in the event of a future outbreak.**

This is not an exhaustive list. There are good ideas from both parties to address this crisis. We have an abundance of tools, but what we do not have is time to wait. Now is not the time for partisanship; now is the time for leadership. I look forward to working with you and members of the General Assembly to ensure the safety and health of North Carolinians during this time of great uncertainty.

Thank you for your serious consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D. (NC-12)  
Member of Congress

CC: The Honorable Roy Cooper, Governor of North Carolina  
Senator Dan Blue, Senate Democratic Leader  
Representative Darren G. Jackson, House Democratic Leader