

Members of the General Assembly Community:

Even amid the news regarding the coronavirus known as “COVID-19,” you continue to meet the high standards for public servants in uncertain times. The business of the people at the General Assembly goes on, and this enduring institution will remain open.

All of us are thinking about what these developments mean for our families and our workplace. Since we last wrote on March 3, more confirmed diagnoses have occurred in our state.

While information about the spread and severity of the respiratory virus is better left to experts at the CDC and elsewhere, we write again to update you on the latest precautionary measures being taken to keep our community safe. In times like these, we will not panic, but we will plan. We remain optimistic that this situation will be but one more challenging time that we overcome.

Jointly, and with the support of the leadership of both chambers, we write to direct as follows:

1. WORKING REMOTELY. Effective immediately, individual supervisors, including legislators, may work with their employees to allow teleworking or electronic commuting in a manner that provides for accountability and productivity—the people’s business must go on. This accommodation is being afforded to all employees who agree to appropriate arrangements with their supervisors; it may be that some jobs simply cannot be performed remotely. These accommodations will be available until at least the end of the business day on Tuesday, March 31, 2020.
2. INTERIM COMMITTEE MEETINGS DELAYED. As of today, legislative leadership requests and directs that no committee, commission or task force meetings be held until Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at the earliest. In accordance with relevant guidance, such gatherings are not prudent at this time. Individual chairs who have questions about this directive may discuss them with Senate and House leadership.
3. SCHOOL GROUP TOURS DELAYED. Keeping this workforce and our thousands of visitors safe is critical. Therefore, school group tours will be discontinued until Wednesday, April 1, 2020 at the earliest.
4. FEEDBACK WELCOME. In the event that any legislative employee wishes to discuss this guidance or his or her personal situation, please do so with your supervisor. Please seek out your supervisor and share that feedback. Transparency and conversation are critical to managing this challenge.
5. CONTINUING TO MONITOR DEVELOPMENTS. We will continue to monitor developments in our state from experts like the CDC and the Department of Health & Human Services. Further guidance will be provided as needed. As April 1, 2020 approaches we will provide additional guidance on whether these safeguards need to remain in place.

In times of uncertainty, it is easy to let the latest news prompt rash or ill- considered action. We seek to do the opposite. The measured, proactive steps outlined above—in addition to the intensive cleaning and sanitation described from last week—are designed to put us in the best position to face challenges ahead while continuing to do our duty.

We thank you for your service. One thing is certain: the people’s branch of government will remain open, and the people’s business will continue thanks to the professionals like you.

Sincerely,

Paul Coble
Legislative
Services Officer

Bart Goodson
Chief of Staff
Speaker of the
House

Andrew Tripp
Chief of Staff
President Pro
Tempore

Fred Aikens
Chief of Staff
Minority Leader

Todd Barlow
Chief of Staff
Minority Leader