



HENRY McMASTER  
GOVERNOR

May 18, 2020

The Honorable Harvey Peeler  
South Carolina Senate  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

The Honorable James H. "Jay" Lucas  
South Carolina House of Representatives  
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Gentlemen:

Today, I have signed into law H. 3411, which provides for the continued and uninterrupted operation of state government into the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020.

The suffering and economic damage inflicted by the COVID-19 virus has been dramatic. To date, over 9,000 South Carolinians have tested positive for the virus and sadly almost 400 have lost their lives. These numbers will rise. Businesses, livelihoods and educations have suffered. Almost 450,000 people have filed for unemployment in the last sixty days.

From the beginning, we have sought to do the maximum damage to the virus, while doing the minimum amount of damage to our economy. The limited, gradual and targeted measures we implemented have worked and, as of this week, almost all restrictions have been relaxed or lifted. Our people are ready to come back strong.

I commend the General Assembly for immediately directing existing state funds from the contingency reserve account to address the COVID-19 virus. These funds will be immediately used to expand testing capabilities and contact tracing efforts in our rural areas and to focus on our at-risk and elderly population. In addition, these funds will help provide resources to help ensure the safe conduct of statewide elections.

But much more must be done – now. The Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security (CARES) Act urgently passed by the Congress and signed into law by President Trump provided South Carolina with over \$1.9 billion dollars. Its sole purpose is the reimbursement of legitimate COVID-19 expenses incurred by state agencies, local governments, first responders, hospitals, school districts and institutions of higher education – to be done quickly but carefully to get them back on their feet. Time is of the essence and deadlines are approaching.

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Page Two

Last month, I announced "AccelerateSC," a coordinated economic revitalization effort involving business leaders, healthcare professionals, educators, local government officials and others. This task force will continue to make recommendations for the safe and swift revitalization of our state's economy.

Shortly, based on many of the AccelerateSC recommendations, I will propose to the General Assembly a listing of priorities for appropriating CARES Act funds. These relief funds belong to the people of South Carolina, not politicians, and we must deliver them to where they are needed. Consideration for their appropriation must be done expeditiously – but also wisely, transparently and with meticulous accountability.

To that end – I ask that you call the General Assembly back into session soon after receiving these recommendations. Any delay will cost the people of our state the one thing they don't have – time.

I have faith in the strength and resilience of South Carolinians. Working together, I am confident that our state will recover and return stronger and more prosperous than ever.

Yours very truly,



Henry McMaster