March 1, 2021

VIA MESSENGER

Honorable Donna M. Frett-Gregory
Senate President
Thirty-Fourth Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Capitol Building
St. Thomas, VI 00802

Re: Request for Approval of Extension of State of Emergency Declaration Due to COVID-19 From March 8, 2021 to May 7, 2021

Dear Senate President Frett-Gregory:

In accordance with Section 11 of the Revised Organic Act of the Virgin Islands of 1954, as amended, and Title 23, Virgin Islands Code Ann. § 1005(d), I submit to the Thirty-Fourth Legislature the enclosed proposed legislation ratifying my Declaration extending the State of Emergency due to COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic (“COVID-19”) until May 7, 2021, to enable the Territory to continue its efforts in protecting the people of the U.S. Virgin Islands (“USVI”) in effectively and timely responding to the health and economic effects of COVID-19 pandemic.

Pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code I hereby set forth the following for consideration by the Legislature:

REASONS FOR THE EXTENSION

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has reported that as of February 28, 2021, the Coronavirus Disease, the severe acute respiratory illness that can spread among humans through respiratory transmission and presents itself with symptoms similar to those of influenza, has sickened more than 28 million people and killed over 510,000 people in the U.S. alone. In the USVI, as of February 26, 2021, as many as 47,981 persons have been tested, showing 2,646 persons as being positive to the virus; 45,225 persons have tested negative to the virus; 2,511
persons have recovered, and there have been 25 fatalities. (See attached as Exhibit A EPI Chart current as of Feb 28, 2021)

Given that the USVI is a major travel destination, it is not immune to COVID-19 spread from external sources and from places that have a higher risk profile. The Territory will remain at risk as long as this virus remains rampant throughout the U.S. and the world. The CDC tightened COVID-19 protocol given warnings of return to serious COVID-19 pandemic conditions and the introduction of new COVID-19 stains. Currently, the Mainland United States is still experiencing a surge, which has placed the USVI at a higher exposure risk. It is necessary for our emergency and law enforcement teams to plan and be prepared for constant fluctuations of conditions of the COVID-19 Pandemic response. The Virgin Islands Department of Health (“DOH”) awaits results of tests conducted daily on additional individuals while all our emergency responders prepare and plan on a daily basis. Extending the State of Emergency for an additional 60-days or greater amount of time is critical to enabling the Territory to implement adequate staffing coverage, obtain and utilize medical supplies, continue control measures for mitigating the risks of COVID-19 and continue the efficient implementation of the vaccination program without interruption.

**TIME PERIOD**

This Declaration Extending the State of Emergency seeks to extend the time for sixty (60) days from the current expiration date of March 8, 2021, to May 7, 2021. As **Title 23, Virgin Islands Code Ann. § 1005(d)** only permits the Governor to renew the State of Emergency on his own for thirty (30) days; and as COVID-19 is unpredictable at this time but projected to last another several months up to a year, and the vaccination program is currently being implemented, I request that the Legislature waive the requirement of Title 23, Section 1005(d) that “No state of emergency may continue for longer than thirty (30) days unless renewed by the Governor”. This will allow us, together, to extend the period of State of Emergency for a greater amount of time, sixty (60) days for this particular extension, and avoid having to call a session every month while unnecessarily exposing the Legislature and its staff to the greater possibility of COVID-19.

**PLAN OF ACTION**

Currently, the recommended plan of action for the Territory includes the following:

- Continue to address the conditions of the COVID-19 Pandemic following those outlined by the President of the United States of America and adapted by our DOH and the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency (“VITEMA”) to the Territory.

- Implementation of the revised Plan of Action attached as Exhibit B.

- Implement the President’s guidelines for re-opening of our economy and Government fully to include criteria and three phases, attached as Exhibit C.
to include criteria and three phases, attached as *Exhibit C*.

At this time, your support in bringing the Declaration Extending the State of Emergency and ratifying legislation before the Thirty-Fourth Legislature for prompt and favorable consideration *within five (5) days hereof* is critical to the Territory's COVID-19 Pandemic response and preparation for fuller re-opening of the economy.

I thank you and the Thirty-Fourth Legislature of the Virgin Islands and look forward to collaborating with you in protecting our fellow Virgin Islanders from the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

*Enclosures*

*ec: Honorable Senators of the Thirty-Fourth Legislature*
BILL NO. 34-________

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE OF THE VIRGIN ISLANDS

REGULAR SESSION

2021

An Act renewing and extending the State of Emergency in the U.S. Virgin Islands based on the COVID-19 Pandemic for an additional 60 days from March 8, 2021 to May 7, 2021.

PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States pursuant to Sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601, et. seq. and consistent with Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 1320b-5), declared a national emergency that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency beginning January 20, 2020;

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States declared the ongoing COVID-19 a pandemic of sufficient severity and magnitude to warrant an emergency declaration for all states, tribes, territories, and the District of Columbia pursuant to Section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. § 5121-5207 (the ‘Stafford Act’);

WHEREAS, the Governor issued Executive Order and Proclamation Declaring a State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 – Coronavirus Pandemic dated March 13, 2020 to coordinate the Territory’s response and protective actions to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) public health emergency and to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors located in the Virgin Islands (“Declaration of a State of Emergency”) and have supplemented such Executive Order and Proclamation with additional Orders;

WHEREAS, the Governor established a VI Task Force on COVID-19 Preparedness, Response and Mitigation to work with territorial, local and federal partners in responding to challenges posed by COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the undersigned designated the Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Health (“DOH”) as the Incident Commander to direct the territorial response and directed the Commissioner of the Virgin Islands Department of Human Services and the Director of the Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency to provide any necessary support to the Incident Commander;

WHEREAS, the DOH has organized a Public Health Incident Management Team to manage the public health impacts of COVID-19 in the Territory;

WHEREAS, on April 2, 2020, the President of the United States declared that a major disaster exists in the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands based on COVID-19;
WHEREAS, the outbreak, as of February 28, 2021, has infected over 114 million people and killed over 2.5 million people around the world, including more than 510,000 deaths in the U.S., according to a tally compiled by Johns Hopkins University from official government figures, though the true numbers are believed to be far higher;

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands DOH received confirmation from the Center for Disease Control ("CDC") that, as of February 26, 2021, 2646 persons, including 25 deceased persons, have tested positive for COVID-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands and currently await results of tests conducted on additional individuals;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to continue through the end of 2021 and will require continuing diligence in combating the pandemic;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, the existing State of Emergency may not last longer than thirty (30) days unless renewed by the Governor and in order to extend the state of emergency beyond the first two 30-day periods, the Governor must submit legislation to the Legislature requesting an extension of the state of emergency;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, the Governor has submitted a request and proposed legislation to extend the existing State of Emergency, initially declared on March 13, 2020 and as supplemented, renewed and extended, from March 8, 2021 to May 7, 2021, a 60-day period;

WHEREAS, the need for the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands to remain in a State of Emergency to respond to and combat this COVID-19 pandemic for the safety of our people and our visitors is paramount and needs to comply with federal guidelines; Now therefore,

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the Virgin Islands:

SECTION 1. Notwithstanding any provisions of law to the contrary, the provisions of Title 23, Section 1005(d) are hereby waived from March 8, 2021, to permit the renewal of the state of emergency for a period of sixty (60) days to facilitate proper planning and response in the face of COVID Pandemic.

SECTION 2. Pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, having received the request of the Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands to extend the State of Emergency in the US Virgin Islands, which request includes the specific reasons for the extension, the time-
period of the extension, and a plan of action to address the conditions that necessitate the extension
of the State of Emergency, the Legislature of the Virgin Islands, hereby extends and renews the
State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 Coronavirus Pandemic from March 8, 2021, until May
7, 2021, unless, before the expiration of this renewal, the Governor of the U.S. Virgin Islands finds
that a state of emergency no longer exists and as a result, terminates the State of Emergency.

BILL SUMMARY

The purpose of this bill is to ratify the Governor’s extension of the State of Emergency in
the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands due to the COVID-19 Pandemic.
EXECUTIVE ORDER AND PROCLAMATION
BY THE GOVERNOR
OF THE UNITED STATES VIRGIN ISLANDS
EXTENDING THE STATE OF EMERGENCY
IN RESPONSE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

***************

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President of the United States pursuant to Sections 201 and 301 of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. § 1601, et. seq. and consistent with Section 1135 of the Social Security Act, as amended (42 U.S.C. § 1320b-5), declared a national emergency that the COVID-19 outbreak in the United States constitutes a national emergency beginning January 20, 2020;

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WHEREAS, the Governor issued Executive Order and Proclamation Declaring a State of Emergency due to the COVID-19 – Coronavirus Pandemic dated March 13, 2020 to coordinate the Territory’s response and protective actions to address the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (“COVID-19”) public health emergency and to provide for the health, safety, and welfare of residents and visitors located in the Virgin Islands (“Declaration of a State of Emergency”) and have supplemented such Executive Order and Proclamation with additional Orders;

WHEREAS, the Governor established a VI Task Force on COVID-19 Preparedness, Response and Mitigation to work with territorial, local and federal partners in responding to challenges posed by COVID-19;

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WHEREAS, the DOH has organized a Public Health Incident Management Team to manage the public health impacts of COVID-19 in the Territory;

WHEREAS, on April 2, 2020, the President of the United States declared that a major disaster exists in the Territory of the U.S. Virgin Islands based on COVID-19;

WHEREAS, the outbreak, as of February 28, 2021, has infected over 114 million people and killed over 2.5 million people around the world, including more than 510,000 deaths in the U.S., according to a tally compiled by Johns Hopkins University from official government figures, though the true numbers are believed to be far higher;

WHEREAS, the Virgin Islands DOH received confirmation from the Center for Disease Control ("CDC") that, as of February 26, 2021, 2646 persons, including 25 deceased persons, have tested positive for COVID-19 in the U.S. Virgin Islands and currently await results of tests conducted on additional individuals;

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is projected to continue through the end of 2021 and will require continuing diligence in combating the pandemic;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, the existing State of Emergency may not last longer than thirty (30) days unless renewed by the Governor and in order to extend the state of emergency beyond the first two 30-day periods, the Governor must submit legislation to the Legislature requesting an extension of the state of emergency;

WHEREAS, pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, the Governor has submitted a request and proposed legislation to extend the existing State of Emergency, initially declared on March 13, 2020 and as supplemented, renewed and extended, from March 8, 2021 to May 7, 2021, a 60-day period;

WHEREAS, the need for the Territory of the United States Virgin Islands to remain in a State of Emergency to respond to and combat this COVID-19 pandemic for the safety of our people and our visitors is paramount and needs to comply with federal guidelines;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Albert Bryan Jr., Governor of the United States Virgin Islands, by virtue of the authority granted to me by Section 11 of the Revised Organic Act of 1954, as amended, and Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, do hereby DECLARE as follows:

SECTION 1. The State of Emergency declared effective March 13, 2020, as renewed, supplemented, and extended, which is set to expire on March 8, 2021, is hereby extended for an additional 60 days, subject to the authority of the Legislature, pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, and such State of Emergency, along with all terms declared and ordered, as renewed, extended, and supplemented shall continue in full force and effect through May 7, 2021, unless earlier lifted or extended by order of the Governor of the United States Virgin Islands.
Islands.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Seal of the Government of the United States Virgin Islands to be affixed at Charlotte Amalie, St. Thomas, Virgin Islands, this 1st day of March, A.D., 2021.

Albert Bryan Jr.
Governor

ATTEST:

Donna M. Frett-Gregory
President
Thirty-Fourth Legislature of the Virgin Islands
Confirmed COVID-19 cases in the U.S. Virgin Islands, N=2646

Illnesses that started during this time may not yet be reported.

St. Croix

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STJ risk factors

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*ALL DATA ARE PROVISIONAL*
STATE OF EMERGENCY

COVID-19

US VIRGIN ISLANDS Plan of Action Outline

March 1, 2021

In support of Request for Approval of Declaration for Extension of State of Emergency pursuant to Title 23, Section 1005(d) of the Virgin Islands Code, the following Outline of Proposed Action Plan for response to COVID-19 Pandemic Disaster in the US Virgin Islands (USVI) is presented:

1. USVI has been and will continue to follow President Biden’s COVID Plan for enhancing mitigation factors and vaccine distribution and administration and reopening the USVI’s economy in several phases. Under the guidelines, the USVI will need to meet six metrics that include demonstrating a downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases over a 14-day period; a consistent system for testing health care workers and anyone reporting symptoms or having been tested positive; ensure healthcare system capacity for a surge should it arise; and enabling contact tracing, before we can proceed to a phased opening.

2. The federal government will continue to work with USVI to ensure we have the equipment, supplies and testing resources to reopen safely and responsibly. Other metrics include downward trajectory of influenza-like illnesses reported within a 14-day period, downward trajectory of documented cases within a 14-day period or downward trajectory of positive tests as a percent of total tests within a 14-day period (flat or increasing volume of tests), treating all patients without crisis care and robust testing program in place for at-risk healthcare workers, including emerging antibody testing.

3. The USVI’s COVID-19 positivity rate of 2/26/2021 is 5.9%. It is predicted that our positivity rate will continue to fluctuate due to the possibility of COVID-19 new variants identified which are more transmissible and potentially more deadly. Our Public Health Laboratory has begun to submit positive samples to CDC for sequencing to determine the presence of variants within the Territory. Extending the State of Emergency for an additional 60 days provides the staffing coverage and control measures to continue in mitigating the risk. In particular, this extended time frame assists with vaccination sequencing.

4. **TO DATE THE FOLLOWING HAS TAKEN PLACE:**
   - The Commissioner of Health (DOH) continues to provide effective Incident Command.
   - Virtual Emergency Operation Council continues using ECS protocols.
   - Weekly ESF 8 meetings with our ESF8 partners along with additional interagency members continue.
   - DOH leadership team has organized an effective response to the pandemic to include a more “boots on the ground” approach to high risk/high prone areas.

**EXHIBIT B**
This includes use of local jingle, distribution of COVID-19 literature, teaching time and hand sanitizers (Thousands of masks, hand sanitizers and pamphlets distributed.)

- Pop-up Testing occurs weekly on all four islands, at nursing homes and other non-congregate and congregate facilities.

- Incoming passenger screening at airports in conjunction with the VI National Guard (VING) and wide-spread signage at all USVI ports and DOH facilities with Center for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines regarding COVID-19 symptoms, guidance to self-quarantine for 14 days if traveling, and instructions on how to reach the Epidemiology hotline.

- Activation of Inductive Health contract for electronic contact tracing on September 21. Inductive Health utilizes Secure Monitoring and Reporting for Public Health (SARA) alert for contact tracing. All positives, as well as all contacts of positives are enrolled in SARA alert and their health monitored daily.

- New local staff have been hired in lieu of utilizing CDC deployed Teams who will assist with all Epidemiology efforts related to COVID-19 and contact tracing.

- Adequate supply of PPE has continued to be ordered and received. Prioritization is in place to ensure that clinical sites receive critical supplies needed for patient care.

- A methodology for reporting PPE on hand, burn rates, and needs is in place.

- Surge planning continues, the requisite requests have been placed with FEMA and DHHS.

- All current (local/federal) budgets in December have been completed and uploaded with OMB and eCIVIS.

- Environmental Health staff has been monitoring businesses for compliance and parks, beaches and public places through a taskforce that includes DPNR, DLCA, VIPD, P&R, and VING personnel. Over 80 citations served only after noncompliance with training and followed by further training.

- Testing is being performed at the VI Public Health lab. Testing equipment for short turn around on results was shared with hospitals. Abbot quick testing machine was received, Abbot ID Now tests which is a PCR test and Abbott binax antigen point of care tests are utilized daily at free testing sites.

- Total of 24 Abott ID Now machines distributed to Federal/ly Qualified Health Center, community labs, urgent care centers. These machines are also used in pop up testing venues throughout the territory.

- The federal government as of 2021 is no longer providing testing supplies directly to states and territories, and now public health labs are given priority to purchase them or processed through VITEMA for hard to obtain PPE, or thru National Guard and Federal assistance

- At Limetree Bay Terminals Refinery, mitigation protocols continue and have proven effective with minimum number of positives reported and verified in the Department of Health.

- Title 32 (T32) mission assignment for National Guard to COVID-19 support
to the Department of Health and Facilitate Economic Recovery received POTUS extension to September 30, 2021. Effective January 21, 2021 the Title 32 cost share to the Territory is 0% and is retroactive to August 22, 2020. Federal funding is approved from February 1, 2021 to February 28, 2021. Such orders include duty necessary to comply with health protection protocols recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention of the Department of Health and Human Services or other health protection measures agreed to by the Department of Defense and FEMA. The Department of Human Services (DHS) completed its plan for non-congregate and congregate sheltering options to support COVID-19 preventive measures beyond a Category 1 Hurricane threat to the Territory.

- Activation and deployment of the FEMA Region II Incident Management Assessment Team (IMAT) to support federal resources available to assist in the planning and implementation of the VI Department of Health’s vaccine program.

- 31 Local Community Based Healthcare Providers have become “Vaccine Providers” and have continued to assist in the efforts to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The medical countermeasure of vaccine administration began December of 2020 with ~ 500 vaccines or “shot in arms” administered daily.

- Beginning February 2, 2021, VITEMA began operating a COVID-19 vaccination appointment call-center and receives an average of 125 calls per day, Monday through Friday. Requests for vaccine appointments are coordinated with 15 public and private vaccine healthcare providers seeking assistance with off-loading the high call demand for the vaccination. There are nine (9) participating healthcare providers on St. Croix, four (4) on St. Thomas and one (1) on St. John. There is no cost to the providers desiring to partner with VITEMA for the vaccine call-center service. VITEMA also coordinates with the same healthcare providers, by phase, with eligible local and federal agencies for individuals desiring to receive the COVID-19 vaccination. VITEMA has been requested by DOH, using federal COVID-19 vaccination funding, to increase its staffing level and call-center technology to support call-center requests for two (2) Territory Community Vaccination Centers (CVC). The Department of Health’s Immunization and Epidemiology Teams joined in the efforts to secure appointments for the March 1st Community Vaccination Centers.

- Beginning March 1, 2021, the Territory opened two (2) Community Vaccination Centers (CVC) with capacity to administer up to 250 vaccines per day, Monday through Friday. MOUs between DOH and University of the Virgin Islands permit the CVCs to operate on St. Croix at the Great Hall and on St. Thomas at the Sports Fitness Gymnasium. These vaccination sites offer the COVID-19 Pfizer vaccination, 2 doses, at no cost to the individual and eligibility is open anyone age 16 and up, including those with disabilities. The CVC on St. Croix is staffed by the combination of clinical and non-clinical staff from the DOH and VING, The CVC on St. Thomas is staffed by the combination of clinical and non-clinical staff from the DOH, VING, and the Department of Defense. Both CVCs operate on a “by appointment basis” from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm. The CVCs will stay open and staffed for the next six (6) weeks and are focused on meeting Governor Bryan’s goal of 50,000
unique COVID-19 vaccines in arms by July 1, 2021. Operational need beyond that period will be determined on the overall Territorial demand. The VIDOH and VING are prepared and in the process of preparing the transition from DOD to local staff. There is no cost to the Territory for the use of VING or Department of Defense personnel to operate the CVCs as it is 100% federally funded.

- The VIDOH also entered into a MOU with FEMA at the Nissan Building, which have been used by the V.I. Veterans Office to provide 1st and 2nd doses to their veterans.

5. In anticipation of reopening circulation of people and local businesses, the DOH, as the lead territorial agency, along with VITEMA continues to balance our approach to the data gathered; for example: 1) expansion and prioritization of testing sites 2) rapid quarantine of infected persons to prevent disease spread, 3) identification contacts with whom infected people may have exposed.

6. Sentinel surveillance sites for testing asymptomatic persons established (and housing for positive persons who cannot quarantine at home)

7. Testing plan has been implemented for all congregate living facilities to include senior living facilities and jail/prisons to include every two-week testing for all staff, new residents, residents that leave the facilities for procedures, and detainees/prisoners.

8. The Department has joined with the Department Sports, Parks and Recreation to educate and remind businesses of best practices for avoiding the spread of COVID-19.

9. DOH has identified “Buddies” for all agencies, hospitals and other semi-autonomous agencies for easier access and guidance.

10. Department of Health and Virgin Islands National Guard join forces to secure storage and distribution of vaccines.

11. March 1, 2021 marks the opening of Phase 3 and allows for all phases to receive an appointment for their vaccine.

12. Press releases, PSAs, talk shows, etc. are only a few media sources used to educate public on vaccination sites and providers.

- The logistic team (VITEMA and VIDOH) have completed a full inventory of PPEs in the territory. Identified needs have been addressed and we continue to provide needed resources to our healthcare staff.

- Education and outreach to individuals who are hesitant to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

13. If we stand down the State of Emergency, there are internal government factors that will change and create hardships for the territory. During a State of Emergency, government suspends normal constitutional procedures to regain control:

- Ability to request resources from the federal government and received technical support and other resources available to use during this emergency.

EXHIBIT B
• Having control of goods and services. Price Freeze on goods and services. During an event like a worldwide pandemic, the supply chain for goods are services are limited. We must keep the USVI territory included in the national stockpile to received goods.

• We must control how, and which business can operate. The state of emergency would continue control to preempt business that allow close contacts of patrons and deemed unsafe.

• Mandatory targeted testing will be implemented to mitigate a second surge of admitted patients, intubated patients, and death. See below:

  ➢ The current data indicates that under 5.9% of persons tested are positive.

  ➢ We have 2646 persons, including 25 deceased persons, have tested positive for COVID-19 and currently await results of tests conducted on additional individuals – information current as of 02/26/2021.

  ➢ All medical personnel/first responders have access to test. Testing protocol for high-risk work areas being developed.

  ➢ We continue to update plans to safeguard our limited medical professional resources.

  ➢ Essential direct care providers (i.e., social workers, homemakers, meals on wheels, childcare, correctional officers, nurses, nutrition staff, 24/7 residential services staffing)

14. We may see an increased number of new cases as a result of the variants discussed above and we must be prepared to address the increase in cases accordingly. The anticipated increased activity at the seaports and airports in the coming months may re-introduce the USVI population to COVID-19. Note that the samples sent to CDC for sequencing have not yielded any positive variants.

15. An extension of the State of Emergency thru May 7, 2021 or later is needed to deploy measures to safely protect our borders as well as demonstrate achievement of POTUS Guidelines for Opening Up America Again.
The American people deserve an urgent, robust, and professional response to the growing public health and economic crisis caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. President Biden believes that the federal government must act swiftly and aggressively to help protect and support our families, small businesses, first responders, and caregivers essential to help us face this challenge, those who are most vulnerable to health and economic impacts, and our broader communities - not to blame others or bail out corporations.

The Biden-Harris administration will always:

- Listen to science
- Ensure public health decisions are informed by public health professionals
- Promote trust, transparency, common purpose, and accountability in our government

President Biden and Vice President Harris have a seven-point plan to beat COVID-19.

Ensure all Americans have access to regular, reliable, and free testing.

- Double the number of drive-through testing sites.
- Invest in next-generation testing, including at home tests and instant tests, so we can scale up our testing capacity by orders of magnitude.
- Stand up a Pandemic Testing Board like Roosevelt’s War Production Board. It’s how we produced tanks, planes, uniforms, and supplies in record time, and it’s how we will produce and distribute tens of millions of tests.
- Establish a U.S. Public Health Jobs Corps to mobilize at least 100,000 Americans across the country with support from trusted local organizations in communities most at risk to
perform culturally competent approaches to contact tracing and protecting at-risk populations.

**Fix personal protective equipment (PPE) problems for good.**

President Biden is taking responsibility and giving states, cities, tribes, and territories the critical supplies they need.

- Fully use the Defense Production Act to ramp up production of masks, face shields, and other PPE so that the national supply of personal protective equipment exceeds demand and our stores and stockpiles — especially in hard-hit areas that serve disproportionately vulnerable populations — are fully replenished.

- Build immediately toward a future, flexible American-sourced and manufactured capability to ensure we are not dependent on other countries in a crisis.

**Provide clear, consistent, evidence-based guidance for how communities should navigate the pandemic — and the resources for schools, small businesses, and families to make it through.**

- Social distancing is not a light switch. It is a dial. President Biden will direct the CDC to provide specific evidence-based guidance for how to turn the dial up or down relative to the level of risk and degree of viral spread in a community, including when to open or close certain businesses, bars, restaurants, and other spaces; when to open or close schools, and what steps they need to take to make classrooms and facilities safe; appropriate restrictions on size of gatherings; when to issue stay-at-home restrictions.

- Establish a renewable fund for state and local governments to help prevent budget shortfalls, which may cause states to face steep cuts to teachers and first responders.

- Call on Congress to pass an emergency package to ensure schools have the additional resources they need to adapt effectively to COVID-19.

- Provide a “restart package” that helps small businesses cover the costs of operating safely, including things like plexiglass and PPE.

*"THIS ISN’T ABOUT POLITICS. IT’S ABOUT SAVING LIVES."*

PRESIDENT BIDEN, SEPTEMBER 16, 2020
Plan for the effective, equitable distribution of treatments and vaccines — because development isn’t enough if they aren’t effectively distributed.

- Invest $25 billion in a vaccine manufacturing and distribution plan that will guarantee it gets to every American, cost-free.

- Ensure that politics plays no role in determining the safety and efficacy of any vaccine. The following 3 principles will guide the Biden-Harris administration: Put scientists in charge of all decisions on safety and efficacy; publicly release clinical data for any vaccine the FDA approves; and authorize career staff to write a written report for public review and permit them to appear before Congress and speak publicly uncensored.

- Ensure everyone — not just the wealthy and well-connected — in America receives the protection and care they deserve, and consumers are not price gouged as new drugs and therapies come to market.

Protect older Americans and others at high risk.

President Biden understands that older Americans and others at high-risk are most vulnerable to COVID-19.

- Establish a COVID-19 Racial and Ethnic Disparities Task Force, as proposed by Vice President Harris, to provide recommendations and oversight on disparities in the public health and economic response. At the end of this health crisis, it will transition to a permanent Infectious Disease Racial Disparities Task Force.

- Create the Nationwide Pandemic Dashboard that Americans can check in real-time to help them gauge whether local transmission is actively occurring in their zip codes. This information is critical to helping all individuals, but especially older Americans and others at high risk, understand what level of precaution to take.

Rebuild and expand defenses to predict, prevent, and mitigate pandemic threats, including those coming from China.

- Immediately restore the White House National Security Council Directorate for Global Health Security and Biodefense, originally established by the Obama-Biden administration.

- Immediately restore our relationship with the World Health Organization, which — while not perfect — is essential to coordinating a global response during a pandemic.
• Re-launch and strengthen U.S. Agency for International Development’s pathogen-tracking program called PREDICT.

• Expand the number of CDC’s deployed disease detectives so we have eyes and ears on the ground, including rebuilding the office in Beijing.

**Implement mask mandates nationwide by working with governors and mayors and by asking the American people to do what they do best: step up in a time of crisis.**

Experts agree that tens of thousands of lives can be saved if Americans wear masks. President Biden will continue to call on:

• Every American to wear a mask when they are around people outside their household.

• Every Governor to make that mandatory in their state.

• Local authorities to also make it mandatory to buttress their state orders.

Once we succeed in getting beyond this pandemic, we must ensure that the millions of Americans who suffer long-term side effects from COVID don’t face higher premiums or denial of health insurance because of this new pre-existing condition. The Biden-Harris Administration will work to ensure that the protections for those with pre-existing conditions that were won with Obamacare are protected. And, they will work to lower health care costs and expand access to quality, affordable health care through a Medicare-like public option.