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Member:
Education Committee
Health & Insurance Committee

COLORADO
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
STATE CAPITOL
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November 17, 2020

Dear Constituents of Colorado House District 39,

The celebration of Thanksgiving goes beyond mere tradition. Thanksgiving is a national day of remembrance for the remarkable story that gave rise to liberty on this continent.

When we gather the last Thursday in November as a national day "of Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father" as established by President Abraham Lincoln in 1863, we will certainly all have the COVID-19 pandemic on our minds. The appropriate role for government in a health challenge is to provide an accurate understanding of the virus in order to assist families in making informed decisions in their own self interests.

It is important for Americans to realize that, in spite of their good intentions, neither a Governor, a President-elect nor I as your State Representative have the constitutional authority to restrict the number of family members who gather in your home. You have a constitutionally guaranteed right of assembly and association, specifically protected in the First Amendment. And for many Coloradans, Thanksgiving is also a religious holiday — a time to gather with family and thank God for His blessings; and your right to the free exercise of religion is similarly protected by the First Amendment. America has been through many other tough times and medical epidemics (smallpox, yellow fever, Spanish flu, cholera, and so forth), and the Constitution is not suspended because of a pandemic. As the US Supreme Court long ago affirmed:

"The Constitution of the United States is a law for rulers and people, equally in war and in peace, and covers with the shield of its protection all classes of men, at all times, and under all circumstances. No doctrine involving more pernicious [malicious] consequences was ever invented by the wit of man than that any of its provisions can be suspended during any of the great exigencies [emergencies] of government. Such a doctrine leads directly to anarchy or despotism."

I hope that you and family enjoy a wonderful, healthy and memorable Thanksgiving.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Baisley".

Mark Baisley