



NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY

NORTH CAROLINA SENATE

April 21, 2020

Governor Roy Cooper
20301 Mail Services Center
Raleigh, NC 27699

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

Dear Governor Cooper,

Thank you for your efforts to lead North Carolina through the unexpected COVID-19 pandemic. Your decisions to date have evidenced a deep concern about public health, and that focus should never change.

What has changed, however, is experience and data, which have expanded and continue to do so daily. Every day, the Executive Branch collects more detailed data. We also have the benefit of national and other states' research that did not exist when you issued your executive orders shuttering businesses and requiring citizens to stay home. That was some seven weeks ago, but it feels like an eternity.

Since issuing your order, we better understand that health outcomes vary depending on age and the existence of underlying conditions. As economic activity has grinded to a halt, we've seen historic job losses, with jobless claims continuing to exceed record highs. Of concern is an increase in mental health issues and an unwillingness or inability for many North Carolinians to undergo elective surgeries and maintain treatments for chronic conditions.

Unfortunately, North Carolina does not see that you have a plan to reopen our state. Details about factors you will use in determining when and how to reopen our state for business have not been revealed.

You say you need more testing. Absent are any specifics as to how much more testing you determine is needed. It's also important to know the gap between that number and our existing capacity.

We hear you and your administration say that more PPE is needed. But you have not provided information about how much more or even how much we currently have.

Interestingly, Wake County representatives told the press yesterday that Wake County currently has several *months'* supply of PPE.

You've also indicated more tracing will be needed. What steps have been taken to hire and train personnel for tracing? What precisely is your tracing plan? We would hope that a detailed tracing plan exists, but just has not yet been revealed to the public.

You've indicated that trends are important to understand. What specific trends should we look for, and what are the specific trend results that indicate success or progress and an ability to allow additional economic activity?

With respect, why haven't you communicated a step-by-step plan to reopen our economy and put North Carolinians back to work? The fact that no such plan has been publicized may lead to a reasonable conclusion that no such plan exists.

Up to this point, your Department of Health and Human Services has failed and refused to disclose those data points that seem to be most important in determining that it is safe to begin reopening. Had you agreed to conduct the type of random sample testing that has been underway in other states for weeks, you would likely have more actionable data available now to inform your plans, but that is beside the point.

Your DHHS has not released data on how many patients have successfully recovered from the virus.

Your DHHS has not released data on how many of those who passed away from COVID-19 had other serious underlying medical conditions. What is the average age of those who have passed? What percentage had heart disease, diabetes, or immune-compromising illnesses? This data is critical to the public's understanding of the virus, yet you have not released it.

Your administration has superior access to information, and has exclusive access to much of the data that has not been publicly disclosed. Transparency, not secrecy, will foster public trust during a pandemic.

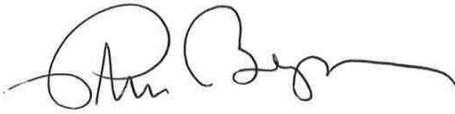
Fortunately, we can benefit to a degree from the more transparent disclosures from other states, and benefit from their advanced research. Recent studies in California estimate the prevalence of the virus to be anywhere from 28 to 85 times higher than recorded positive results, which means hospitalization and fatality rates of those infected are much lower than models projected. We wish you had not declined to conduct this type of testing here, but other states' data can be instructive.

How and in what ways has your administration updated its modeling to account for new available data points? At what point will your administration respond to the April 15 letter to Secretary Cohen asking for the underlying model?

In summary: What is your plan, when will your administration begin releasing your plan, and when will your administration begin releasing, not withholding, key information? North Carolinians deserve to know. Lives and livelihoods are at stake.

The undersigned legislators call on you to publish your plan to reopen North Carolina and to share the data that's being withheld by your administration.

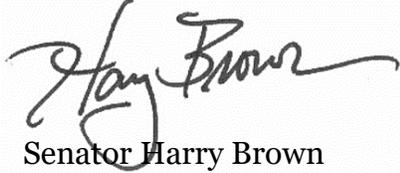
Sincerely,



Senator Phil Berger



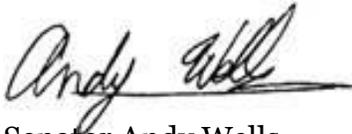
Senator Ted Alexander



Senator Harry Brown



Senator John Alexander



Senator Andy Wells



Senator Rob Bryan



Senator Vickie Sawyer



Senator Carl Ford



Senator Chuck Edwards



Senator Rick Horner



Senator Jim Burgin



Senator Ralph Hise



Senator Brent Jackson



Senator Paul Newton



Senator Deanna Ballard



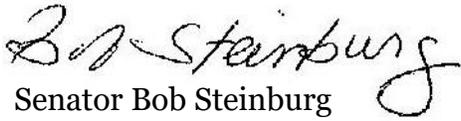
Senator Jim Perry



Senator Jim Davis



Senator Rick Gunn



Senator Bob Steinburg



Senator Kathy Harrington



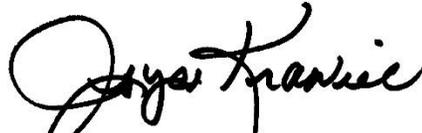
Senator Jerry Tillman



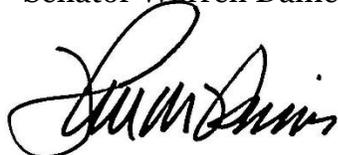
Senator Todd Johnson



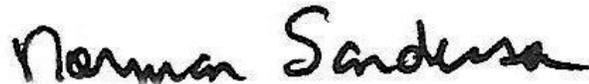
Senator Warren Daniel



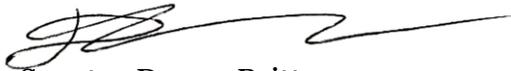
Senator Joyce Krawiec



Senator Tom McInnis



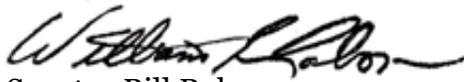
Senator Norm Sanderson



Senator Danny Britt



Senator Eddie Gallimore



Senator Bill Rabon