

*****MEDIA ALERT*****

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**DELEGATE ISAAC SPONAUGLE AGAIN REQUESTS GOVERNOR TO CALL
SPECIAL SESSION IMMEDIATELY FOR CORONAVIRUS**

FRANKLIN, W.Va.— Delegate Isaac Sponaugle again requests that the Governor call a special session immediately for legislation and funding to mitigate the health and economic fallout of the spread of the coronavirus in West Virginia.

“Members of the legislature need to be called in for a special session immediately. We must pass key pieces of legislation before the coronavirus crashes into the state,” Sponaugle said. “We’re elected to protect our people and we haven’t done that. It’s vital that we get certain key measures in place before it’s too late. No member of the legislature should be hunkering down until we complete our oath of office to take care of our people.”

During the Special Session, the following economic legislation and funding must be considered:

- Legislation to create a small business emergency fund within the West Virginia Department of Commerce to provide bridge grants to all state small businesses that don’t qualify for other federal or state emergency relief. This is to ensure that all small businesses can meet their short-term obligations without forcing them into bankruptcy during the coronavirus pandemic.
- West Virginia needs to extend all taxpayer and business-related filing deadlines until June 15, 2020. The deadline extension should apply to all taxpayers and West Virginia businesses. Taxpayers and businesses who file and pay by the extended due date will receive a waiver of all interest and penalties. If the IRS extends its April filing deadline for corporate and individual income tax returns, West Virginia will conform to the decision of the IRS.
- A robust, expansive, no excuse voting by mail option for voters. This is in addition to delaying the primary election for at least 30 to 60 days to protect all poll workers and voters from coronavirus.
- Appropriation of monies and granting of spending authority to DHHR. This is for expanded testing of citizens for coronavirus and for the purchase of respirators, ventilators and all the equipment that the federal government has advised the state it will not provide.
- Appropriation of at least \$100 million from \$858.3 million in the rainy-day fund to pay for the small business emergency relief fund, the extend tax deadline, the Governor’s civil contingency fund for disaster relief and to cover all looming revenue shortfalls for the fiscal year 2020.

“I’m again calling on the Governor to call a special session immediately to get key pieces of legislation and funding completed that he can’t do by way on an executive order,” Sponaugle said.

“To bring the full force of state government to fight the coronavirus, you must have the legislature branch involved to pass law and fund critical matters.”

Delegate Sponaugle has called on the Governor to enact state policies by executive order for the following:

- Shutting down all state, county and local governments, except for essential personnel.
- Independent testing centers located off site from hospitals, rural health care clinics and county health departments.
- Closure of all education establishments, gyms, museums, cultural and social centers, swimming pools, and theaters.
- Hospital visits by family and friends are limited.
- Work meetings must be postponed. Work from home must be encouraged.

“We owe it to our citizens to put them first and to complete the work that we’re elected to do,” said Sponaugle. “It’s not option to delay any further. Time is not on our side to avoid a total state disaster.”

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