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News Release

For Immediate Release
16 March 2020

Senator Norment calls on Governor Northam to convene special session

Williamsburg, Virginia, 16 March 2020: Senator Thomas K. Norment, Jr. (R-James City) today called on Governor Ralph S. Northam (D) to convene a special session of the Virginia General Assembly to address concerns related to the Coronavirus outbreak and the effects of the continuing state of emergency.

In a letter to the Governor, Norment cited three specific purposes for the special session. Reinforcing a concern raised by Senator Stephen D. Newman (R-Bedford) during Thursday's Senate debate on final passage of House Bill 30, Norment is requesting that a revenue reforecast be provided to the General Assembly. Additionally, Norment calls for consideration of legislation limiting the liability of employers with employees who have been exposed to the Coronavirus and continue to work without the employers' knowledge of that exposure. Finally, Norment is calling for the exactment of legislation granting local governments and regional commissions greater latitude to conduct necessary business during the continuing state of emergency.

"As Senator Newman and I explained during last Thursday's debate, the economic assumptions and revenue forecasts upon which this budget is based may no longer be operative," Senator Norment remarked. "I have heard estimates that the school closings alone will cost \$444 million. Those additional, unanticipated expenses, as well as revenue projections that may now be too robust necessitate a fresh look at our finances.

“Over the last several days, I have been contacted by several organizations trying to determine how to navigate a challenging situation. Local governments and regional commissions are trying to figure out how they can continue to conduct timely and requisite business with the restrictions placed on gatherings.

“The simplest and most direct way to address these concerns is to convene a special session. I have asked Governor Northam to do that and hope he will give my request serious and prompt consideration.”

Senator Thomas K. Norment, Jr. represents the 3rd District in the Senate of Virginia. The 3rd District includes Gloucester, King and Queen, King William and New Kent Counties and the City of Poquoson, and portions of Isle of Wight, James City, Surry, and York Counties, and the Cities of Hampton and Suffolk.

ATTACHMENT: Letter to Governor Northam, 16 March 2020

SENATE OF VIRGINIA



COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:
COMMERCE AND LABOR
JUDICIARY
FINANCE AND APPROPRIATIONS
RULES

THOMAS K. NORMENT, JR.

3RD SENATORIAL DISTRICT
ALL OF GLOUCESTER, KING AND QUEEN,
KING WILLIAM, AND NEW KENT COUNTIES;
ALL OF THE CITY OF POQUOSON; PART OF ISLE OF
WIGHT, JAMES CITY, SURRY, AND YORK COUNTIES;
AND PART OF THE CITIES OF HAMPTON AND SUFFOLK
POST OFFICE BOX 6205
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(804) 698-7503 RICHMOND
(757) 259-7810 WILLIAMSBURG

March 16, 2020

The Honorable Ralph S. Northam
Governor's Office
1111 E Broad St
Richmond VA 23219-1934

Dear Governor Northam:

Events and circumstances directly affecting the people of Virginia, our economy and its businesses, and state and local governments have developed swiftly since the General Assembly adjourned last Thursday.

The extraordinary measures employed to combat the further spread of Coronavirus have, understandably, required sacrifices of every resident of the Commonwealth. I believe these circumstances and their potential long-term effects on our economy, necessitate prompt legislative action.

I am, therefore, respectfully requesting that you exercise the powers of your office under Article V, Section 5 of the Constitution of Virginia by timely convening a Special Session of the General Assembly.

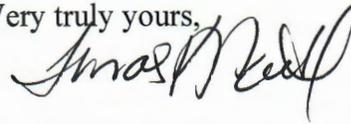
The purposes of this session would be to:

- Provide the General Assembly with a reforecast of anticipated revenues. As noted by Senator Newman and myself during Thursday's debate over the conference report, the revenue assumptions on which the budget are based are likely to be negatively affected by the changes we are now experiencing. It has been estimated that closing Virginia's schools for two weeks will cost \$444 million alone.
- Enact legislation limiting the liability of employers when employees come to work having been exposed to or experiencing symptoms of Coronavirus, and unbeknownst to the employer.
- Enact legislation granting greater latitude to local governments and regional commissions to conduct business during a state of emergency. As an example, HRTAC has already been confronted with this issue, having to cancel a meeting at which critical bond issues were to be approved.

With the duration of the current circumstance uncertain and its effects unpredictable, Virginia's leaders must do all in their power to mitigate the current displacement and position the Commonwealth for an ultimately prosperous future.

I appreciate your attention to my request, and remain,

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tom Norment, Jr.", written in a cursive style.

Thomas K. Norment, Jr.
Senate Republican Leader

CC: Hon. Thomas R. Smigiel, Jr., President, Virginia Municipal League
Hon. Stephen W. Bowen, President, Virginia Association of Counties
Hon. Brian Ball, Secretary of Commerce and Trade
Hon. Aubrey L. Layne, Jr., Secretary of Finance