August 31, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor, State of California
1303 10th Street, Suite 1173
Sacramento, CA 95814

RE: Request for an Extraordinary Session of the Legislature

Dear Governor Newsom:

As a state and a nation these are extraordinary times. When the gavel drops today and the Legislature adjourns for the year, Californians will not have the same option to adjourn from the harmful effects of school closures, business restrictions, and COVID-19.

That is why we write to you to ask that you call an Extraordinary Session of the Legislature as soon as possible so that we may continue meeting until our adjournment sine die on November 30, 2020. The purpose of this session would be to address critical policy issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic, provide oversight and assistance to the Executive Branch, and be a co-equal partner with you in decisions that will impact the lives of 40 million Californians.

This year the Assembly adjourned on March 16, 2020 and did not return until May 4, 2020. It did not reconvene as an entire body on the Assembly Floor until June 8, 2020, a period of nearly three months. We then adjourned again on June 18, 2020 for an additional month. On July 28, 2020 we returned again for a truncated race to the finish that left many important policy questions unanswered. Our colleagues in the Senate faced similar challenges. All in all our Legislative Session was cut short by nine weeks, a 30 percent reduction to our traditional legislative calendar.

The results of this reduction were devastating for the people of California. Many of their representatives introduced proposals to protect the livelihoods of workers, provide relief to small businesses, and reform the Employment Development Department. Not only were these proposals shelved, many of them were refused a hearing based on arbitrary and unilateral decisions using the shortened session as an excuse. This process not only undermined the democratic process of the institution, it also robbed countless Californians of critical relief in a time of historic need.
For these reasons, we believe it is necessary that an Extraordinary Session of the Legislature be called to address this unfinished business. The Session should be structured to include the following issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- Tax and regulatory relief for small businesses, as well as a comprehensive reopening policy with clear metrics and reliable expectations
- Definitive guidance for the safe reopening of schools including safety protocols, precise metrics, and liability relief
- Significant reform to allow flexibility for independent workers and the gig economy at a time when many Californians are unable to work
- A full audit of the Employment Development Department to ensure Californians will get the benefits they desperately need
- Updates to the Emergency Services Act that require the Legislature to reauthorize, after a specified period of time, a State of Emergency called by the Executive

I urge you to do what is right for the people of California and call an Extraordinary Session of the Legislature. The COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of our state’s response is not taking a break. The Legislative Branch of our government shouldn’t either.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

[Signatures]