



Washington State Legislature

DELIVERED VIA EMAIL

April 17, 2020

The Honorable Jay Inslee
Governor, State of Washington
PO Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504

Dear Governor Inslee:

We are sorry for the countless families in our state who have lost loved ones or had them suffer because of COVID-19. Still, we are thankful the counts are as low as they are, considering Washington had the first reported case of the virus and the first virus-related death. Measures taken to limit the spread have clearly had a benefit. Unfortunately, simply knowing the number of positive tests, negative tests and deaths does not provide a full picture of the COVID-19 situation in our state.

Because we do not know how many untested Washingtonians have contracted the virus and recovered, we also cannot know the actual rate of fatalities due to COVID-19. Since this pandemic began, testing has been focused on those who are or were hospitalized due to their symptoms. Others who complained of COVID-like symptoms but did not seek hospitalization were advised to stay home and quarantine themselves. Those people were never tested, yet it is likely many did have the virus.

For this reason, we believe it is critical for our state to aggressively expand its focus on testing for the antibodies a person produces in response to COVID-19. Only by testing people who are not displaying symptoms will we know whether the virus has touched a larger percentage of the population than those who have been tested due to symptoms that warrant hospitalization. That will bring a critical level of accuracy to Washington's COVID-19 fatality rate and offer a sense of whether COVID-19 is far more contagious than it is fatal, as some research is indicating.

While we support continuing testing of people for the virus, those who were never tested but instead advised to stay home solely because of their COVID-like symptoms should be tested for COVID-19 antibodies. Also, the state should be able to offer antibody tests to those who had COVID-like symptoms but attributed them to other common illnesses and did not seek medical attention whatsoever. The findings will be invaluable should the virus return at a later time, like most viruses do.

Governor, you have also indicated that the fatality rate is a data point that will influence the lifting of your "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" proclamation and the reopening of Washington's economy. Antibody testing is therefore essential to getting Washingtonians back to work and accelerating what is already sure to be a long economic recovery.

We are encouraged by your public remarks about transitioning away from a broader isolation toward an individualized combination of testing, isolation, and treatment. We in turn encourage you to speak publicly about the importance of antibody testing, to give Washington's business community a sense of hope that they will be able to ease back into safe operations before it's too late, and direct the appropriate executive-branch agencies to put the same priority on antibody testing that is now placed on testing for the virus itself.

Sincerely,



Senator Lynda Wilson
17th Legislative District



Rep. Gina Mosbrucker
14th Legislative District



Senator Ann Rivers
18th Legislative District



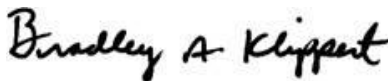
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Senator Randi Becker
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Rep. Brad Klippert
8th Legislative District



Rep. Larry Hoff
18th Legislative District



Rep. Joe Schmick
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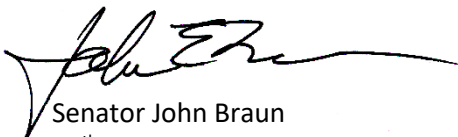
Rep. Paul Harris
17th Legislative District



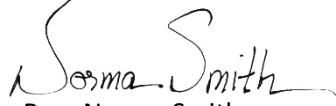
Senator Judy Warnick
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Rep. Bob McCaslin
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20th Legislative District



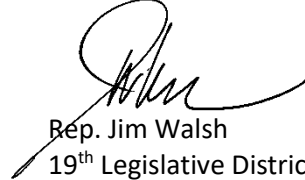
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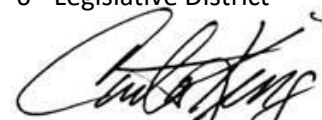
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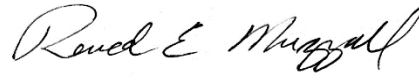
Senator Curtis King
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Senator Mark Schoesler
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Senator Hans Zeiger
25th Legislative District


Senator Steve O'Ban
28th Legislative District


Senator Phil Fortunato
30th Legislative District

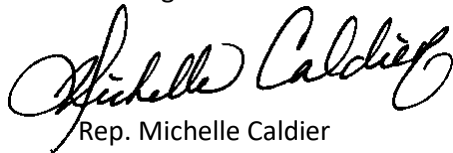

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