



**State of Connecticut**  
**CONNECTICUT GENERAL ASSEMBLY**  
STATE CAPITOL  
HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT 06106-1591

January 25, 2021

Dear Legislative Leaders,

We are writing today to offer a potential path forward on the decision about whether to continue the broad-based emergency powers that have been held by the executive branch since spring of 2020.

Presented here are a set of conditions that may provide a framework for achieving the critical goal of reestablishing the legislature as a co-equal branch of government and giving the people a voice in the decision-making process once again. We know you share this goal as well.

Our state would not be alone on such a path. According to a recent Pew report, in at least half the states, lawmakers have proposed curbing executive branch power in varying forms. Some experts have called for policy that would require governors and public health officials to provide more information as they extend emergency orders so citizens understand the scientific basis for such actions.

Simply put, we've reached a point where the need for a deliberative process when making decisions and developing policy requires public input.

Considering that, we offer the following ideas to the ongoing—and urgent—conversation regarding the executive branch's emergency powers ahead of their Feb. 9 expiration:

- Extend the powers until March 1, provided the Governor articulates a persuasive metric-based case for the extension and any particular executive orders he deems necessary. Meanwhile, legislative leaders and the executive branch would discuss which orders to codify through a full vote of the legislature by submitting them to the committees of cognizance for public hearing;
- Any future declarations would be limited to no more than 30 days, and extensions can only occur through a vote of the full legislature;
- Any modification to sector rules for businesses must include no less than 10 days' notice before becoming effective, unless an emergency exists, in which case the basis for said emergency must be stated in the modification;

- Lift the capacity limit (100) on places of worship as all other protocols of social distancing are followed.

We believe that the public, businesses, and entities of all types should be provided with more time when subject to additional restrictions or closures. Providing this certainty to businesses allows them to react and mitigate losses that are a result of government restriction.

Additionally, we continue to be concerned of the constitutionality of restrictions on the exercise of religion and, therefore, believe that places of worship should not be subject to capacity limitations if they are able to meet physical distancing requirements.

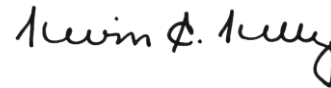
Unfortunately, in our view, the continued exercise of emergency powers has become a matter of convenience, rather than a matter of emergency.

We hope you'll join us in seeking a path toward replacing the overly-broad control held by the executive branch with a more collaborative decision-making process that gives equal footing to legislators and the citizens we were elected to serve.

Sincerely,



Vincent Candelora, 86<sup>th</sup> District  
House Republican Leader



Kevin Kelly, 21<sup>st</sup> District  
Senate Republican Leader

Cc:

Governor Ned Lamont