



Senator Nancy Skinner

REPRESENTING SENATE DISTRICT 9

Dear constituent,

Writing to provide you an update on new actions the state of California is now taking to help reduce the number of Californians who contract coronavirus (COVID-19) and slow its spread.

Gov. Gavin Newsom has now issued an executive order calling on all non-essential events and gatherings [of more than 250 people](#) to be canceled or postponed until at least the end of March. To reduce economic harm to those who may be impacted by the virus or whose work hours may be cut, Gov. Newsom's [executive order](#) also expands paid sick leave and unemployment insurance, as well as delaying the deadline for tax filings. Additional details on the expanded benefits and tax filing delay are further down this letter.

California's public health experts also ask that non-essential smaller events only proceed if the organizers can implement social distancing of 6 feet per person. Further restrictions are recommended for gatherings of individuals who are at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19, limiting those gatherings to no more than 10 people, and following the social distancing guidelines of keeping 6 feet between individuals.

California's updated policy defines a non-essential event as one that brings people together in a single room or single space at the same time, such as conferences, meetings, banquets, concerts, or lectures, whether those take place in an indoor or outdoor space. At this time the executive order does not require movie theaters to be closed.

There are many essential public facilities such as courts and government buildings, like city and county halls, that remain open. Additionally, many California K-12 public schools remain open. However, several local school districts, including Berkeley, Oakland, and West Contra Costa Unified, have decided to close for a few weeks, while others are closely monitoring their particular situations and may decide to close as well, depending on the spread of COVID-19 in their respective community. For more on the state's guidance for K-12 schools, other public programs, childcare programs, nursing homes, and home cleaning, [go here](#).

Gov. Newsom is clear that testing for COVID-19 remains a challenge due to the shortage of full testing materials from the federal government. California plans to ramp up testing in the days ahead as we receive more complete test kits and more private and public testing labs come on line.

Here are specific actions the Governor is taking to help California workers:

- Waived the one-week waiting period for unemployment and disability benefits for people who are unemployed and/or disabled as a result of COVID-19;

- Delayed the deadline for state tax filing by 60 days for individuals and businesses unable to file on time based on compliance with public health requirements related to COVID-19;
- Expanded eligibility for Paid Family Leave (PFL) for those who are caring for an ill or quarantined family member with COVID-19;
- Expanded eligibility for disability insurance for those unable to work due to medical quarantine or illness.
- Those who have lost a job or have had their hours reduced for reasons related to COVID-19 may be able to partially recover their wages by filing an unemployment insurance claim;
- If someone is sick or on preventative care due to state or public officials ordering a quarantine, those individuals may use accrued paid sick leave in accordance with the law;
- If workers are unable to do their usual job because they were exposed to and contracted COVID-19 during the regular course of their work, they may be eligible for workers' compensation benefits.

All information and resources on the above list can be found at Labor.Ca.Gov/Coronavirus2019

Here are some tips to make sure a gathering is safer if it is essential or small:

- Add the recommended 6 feet of social distancing between where individuals sit or stand around tables.
- Limit the number of people in lines.
- Avoid direct physical contact, such as hand-shaking, holding hands, and hugging.
- Extend hours to allow for staggering of attendance or participation.
- Use phones, videos or video conferencing to reduce the need for close interactions.

Finally, If you or someone in your family experience symptoms of COVID-19, may have had contact with a person with COVID-19, or recently traveled to countries with apparent community spread, call your health care provider or local public health department first before seeking medical care so that appropriate precautions can be taken.

Here is a link to [my_email](#) from last week on things you can do to protect yourself and those around you.

I hope this information on new actions California is taking to reduce the spread of COVID-19 is helpful. It is an honor to serve you in the state Senate.

Sincerely,

Nancy Skinner

Nancy Skinner
Senator, 9th District

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[California State Senator Nancy Skinner - District 9](#)
[Senator Skinner's Website - Contact: Senator Skinner](#)

Capitol Office

State Capitol
Room 5094
Sacramento, CA 95814
Phone: (916) 651-4009
Fax: (916) 327-1997

District Office

1515 Clay Street
Suite 2202
Oakland, CA 94612
Phone: (510) 286-1333
Fax: (510) 286-3885



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