

NORTH CAROLINA BAR ASSOCIATION

seeking liberty + justice

March 24, 2020

The Honorable Roy Cooper
Office of the Governor
1 E Edenton St
Raleigh, NC 27601

Re: Essential Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic

Dear Governor Cooper:

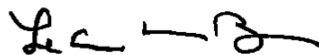
Attorneys across North Carolina are continuing to deliver critically needed legal services while taking active precautions to protect their clients, the public and their employees during the COVID-19 pandemic. The unprecedented impact of the pandemic on the physical and economic health of North Carolinians has required attorneys to continue to provide legal advice, guidance and document preparation as individuals work to maintain and protect their health and livelihood, and companies work to meet and deliver critical needs.

North Carolina law has specific in-person document execution requirements including notarization, will execution and witnessing. A statute is likely needed to address these issues during an emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which significantly limits the ability of individuals to meet in-person. However, so long as current law remains in effect, it is necessary for individuals to appear in-person to execute several types of documents, and the ability of attorneys to provide those needed services should not be limited.

In the event you enact a shelter in place order, or other order of similar effect, we believe that at a minimum, remote legal services and in-person legal services for matters that cannot reasonably be delayed until the end of a shelter in place order should be considered essential services. In combination with that, we believe that the services needed by lawyers to support essential legal services such as administrative support, information technology support and accounting functions should also be considered essential services under such an order. In meeting legal needs, attorneys and firms will continue to take active precautions to protect their clients, the public and their employees.

The legal needs of North Carolinians will not pause during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the problems and issues created by this pandemic will last long after treatments and vaccines are developed. Our profession asks to continue its service to its clients and the public during this time of great need so that we can help today and limit the impact on tomorrow.

Sincerely,



LeAnn Nease Brown
President

cc: Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger
Speaker of the House Tim Moore

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LeAnn Nease Brown
101 N. Columbia Street
Chapel Hill, NC 27514

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