



STATE OF ARKANSAS
ASA HUTCHINSON
GOVERNOR

March 19, 2021

Senator Terry Rice, Co-Chair
Representative Jeff Wardlaw, Co-Chair
Arkansas Legislative Council
State Capitol Building
Little Rock, AR 72201

RE: Request to Extend Emergency

Dear Senator Rice and Representative Wardlaw:

In accordance with Act 403 of 2021, I am requesting to extend the on-going public health emergency for an additional sixty (60) days. This, of course, is subject to the temporary language contained in the above-referenced Act. Arkansas continues to make progress in reducing the number of infections and hospitalizations caused by COVID-19; however, COVID-19 and its variants remain a threat to the health and safety of Arkansans until vaccines are available and administered to a larger population of the state.

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) projections indicate that vaccines should be available for all Americans by May 1, 2021. It is necessary to extend the emergency for an additional sixty (60) days to allow for flexibility and rapid response capabilities until we are able to receive and administer vaccines to any Arkansans who want one.

Additionally, I am seeking an extension of the executive orders issued to assist Arkansans during the pandemic. I appreciate the efforts of the General Assembly to codify virtual shareholder meetings, Workers' Compensation protections, and relief for businesses from charging of employer contributions for unemployment insurance claims. Legislation on the following provisions has not yet been adopted by the General Assembly, so I am asking to extend the following Executive Orders for an additional sixty (60) days, or until such time prior to May 30, 2021, as the subject-matter of these orders becomes law:

- 1) Executive Order 20-05, regarding telehealth.
- 2) Executive Order 20-14, regarding suspension of in-person witnessing and notarization of documents.
- 3) Executive Order 20-52, regarding access to healthcare resources.
- 4) Executive Order 20-33, regarding protection of businesses from liability related to COVID-19.

Attached to this letter, please find a proposed executive order to extend the current public health emergency. Please also find copies of the existing four (4) executive orders I am seeking to extend until such time as those matters are addressed by the General Assembly.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Asa Hutchinson", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Asa Hutchinson

STATE OF ARKANSAS
EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT

PROCLAMATION

EO 21 -

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME – GREETINGS:

EXECUTIVE ORDER TO RENEW THE DISASTER AND PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY TO MITIGATE THE SPREAD AND IMPACT OF COVID-19

WHEREAS: An outbreak of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has spread throughout the world resulting in a global pandemic; and

WHEREAS: On March 11, 2020, by Executive Order 20-03, an emergency was declared in the state as a result of COVID-19, pursuant to the Emergency Services Act at Ark. Code Ann. §§ 12-75-101, *et seq.* The emergency was subsequently renewed by Executive Order 20-25; and

WHEREAS: On June 18, 2020, by Executive Order 20-37, the emergency declared pursuant to Executive Order 20-03, and its amendments was terminated, and the public health and disaster emergency and declaration of the State of Arkansas as a disaster area resulting from the state-wide impact of COVID-19 was declared anew, pursuant to the Emergency Services Act at Ark. Code Ann. §§ 12-75-101, *et seq.* The emergency was subsequently renewed by Executive Orders 20-45, 20-48, 20-51, 20-53 and 21-03; and

WHEREAS: The current state of emergency expires on March 31, 2021, unless it is renewed pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 12-75-107; and

WHEREAS: COVID-19 continues to spread throughout the United States and Arkansas. Over 500,000 Americans, including over 5,500 Arkansans, have died as a result of COVID-19. The nationwide state of emergency declared on March 13, 2020, and the national public health emergency declared on January 27, 2020, remain in effect. All fifty (50) states continue to either maintain a state of emergency or measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS: Arkansas continues to make progress in reducing the number of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations; however, until COVID-19 vaccinations are available to more Arkansans, the virus and its variants remain a public health threat; and

WHEREAS: Continuation of the public health emergency is required to maintain maximum access to resources and flexibility for the administration of the COVID-19 vaccine and the ability to respond to increased cases and hospitalizations until more Arkansans have received the vaccine. Additionally, executive orders issued pursuant to the emergency should be continued until such time as the Arkansas General Assembly has an opportunity to determine whether these measures should become part of Arkansas law;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, ASA HUTCHINSON, Governor of the State of Arkansas, acting under the authority vested in me by Ark. Code Ann. §§ 12-75-101, *et seq.*, in consultation with Secretary of Health, do hereby declare upon the signing of this Executive Order that the emergency declared pursuant to Executive Order 20-37, and renewed by Executive Orders 20-45, 20-48, 20-53, and 21-03 is again renewed pursuant to Ark. Code Ann. § 12-75-

107, and the public health and disaster emergency and declaration of the State of Arkansas as a disaster area resulting from the state-wide impact of COVID-19 shall continue until May 30, 2021. The emergency shall expire at 11:59pm on May 30, 2021.

FURTHERMORE, the following executive orders are adopted and incorporated herein, as if set out word for word, and shall remain in effect until the expiration or renewal of this order, or until such time as the Arkansas General Assembly enacts legislation to provide the citizens of Arkansas with the resources provided by these orders, whichever is earlier:

- a. Executive Order 20-05, regarding telehealth;
- b. Executive Order 20-14, regarding the suspension of in-person witnessing and notarization of legal documents;
- c. Executive Order 20-18 and Executive Order 20-52, regarding access to healthcare resources;
- d. Executive Order 20-33, regarding the protection of businesses from liability related to COVID-19;

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 31st day of March, in the year of our Lord 2021.

Asa Hutchinson, Governor

Attest:

John Thurston, Secretary of State