

## INTERIM STUDY PROPOSAL 2019-150

REQUESTING THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND  
LABOR STUDY POSSIBLE REVISIONS TO THE PROCESS FOR DECLARING AND  
ADDRESSING A PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCY IN THE STATE OF ARKANSAS.

WHEREAS, the global pandemic associated with coronavirus disease 2019  
(hereafter COVID-19) has greatly impacted the United States, including the  
State of Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, on March 11 Governor Asa Hutchinson declared an emergency in  
the state resulting from COVID-19 under the authority of the Arkansas  
Emergency Services Act of 1973, § 12-75-101 et seq.; and

WHEREAS, the State Board of Health and the Secretary of the Department  
of Health have taken actions under the authority of Arkansas Code §§ 20-7-109  
and 20-7-110 and the department's administrative rules, which allow the  
Secretary to impose such quarantine restrictions upon commerce and travel as  
in his judgment may be necessary to prevent the introduction and spread of  
communicable disease; and

WHEREAS, in the ensuing months there have been many administrative  
actions implemented to address COVID-19, including without limitation  
prohibiting in-person dining at restaurants, restricting the type of medical  
procedures that may be performed by dentists and other medical professionals,  
and suspending the operation of certain statutes and administrative rules;  
and

WHEREAS, many of the administrative actions taken to address COVID-19  
have greatly impacted the welfare and livelihood of the citizens of this  
state; and

WHEREAS, these administrative actions were implemented by the executive  
branch with little or no input from the legislative branch prior to those  
actions being directed; and

1           WHEREAS, the past months have illustrated a need to reexamine the  
2 process for declaring large-scale emergencies such as the COVID-19 emergency  
3 and to ensure that a variety of viewpoints and perspectives are considered  
4 before implementing restrictions that have could potentially have an adverse  
5 effect on large portions of the state's population,  
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7 NOW THEREFORE,

8 BE IT PROPOSED BY THE SENATE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC HEALTH, WELFARE, AND LABOR  
9 OF THE NINETY-SECOND GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS:  
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11           THAT the Senate Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor study  
12 the process and procedures that currently exist for declaring a public health  
13 emergency for the state or the majority of its counties, including without  
14 limitation the types of administrative actions that may be taken as part of  
15 such an emergency, and consider whether legislative revisions are appropriate  
16 in the future to provide greater legislative involvement in those processes  
17 and procedures.  
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19           BE IT FURTHER PROPOSED that when conducting the study, the Senate  
20 Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor invite the participation of  
21 the House Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor as well as the  
22 Senate Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs and the House  
23 Committee on State Agencies and Governmental Affairs.  
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25 Respectfully submitted,  
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29 Senator Kim Hammer

30 District 33  
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34 Representative Jimmy Gazaway

35 District 57  
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1 Prepared by: MBM/MBM

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