

Dear Governor Abbott:

Thank you for your service to the great State of Texas and for leading Texans during this very challenging time in the history of our nation. As we have seen in recent case statistics, the large majority of those who have tested positive for COVID-19 are people of color and low-income populations. Public health experts have confirmed that this is mainly because Latinx and people of color are overwhelmingly working on the front lines. Inaction to protect our frontline workers will result in predictable consequences, including loss of life. Our local democracies are trying to take every action allowable under the law to address this reality. Clearly, it is important for the State to join in this endeavor, so we ask for your leadership and assistance in addressing the disproportionate impact this virus has on Latinx Texans.

Please consider the following:

1. Take steps to expand Medicaid. Texas is the most uninsured state in America. The Latinx community lacks health insurance more than any other major population in Texas. These federal health dollars could be used to meet critical health care needs during the COVID-19 crisis.
2. Have the Attorney General drop the lawsuit that is blocking paid sick time policies. Paid sick time would be guaranteed for all workers in Austin, Dallas, and San Antonio if it were not for the state's lawsuit. Paid sick time is more important now, than ever.
3. Use the Economic Stabilization Fund (a.k.a. Rainy Day Fund) to provide immediate and continued financial relief to working class families, regardless of immigration status. Doing so will lead to fewer people being forced to return to work if they are vulnerable or at-risk.
4. Suspend the following sections of the Texas Government Code, added by SB4 in 2017, pertaining to the enforcement of immigration laws by local entities: Sections 752.053, 752.055, 752.056, and 752.0565. Because of these provisions in state law, many immigrants are too afraid to seek critical medical interventions or public assistance for fear of being separated from their families
5. Support Texas municipalities' efforts to manage the COVID-19 crisis. There is no "one size fits all" solution. Municipalities should be permitted to enforce CDC guidelines and emergency protocols that will protect and benefit their unique situations and constituents, which for San Marcos includes a large percentage of Latinx and low-income households. We must be supported in our efforts to save lives and prevent further devastation to these communities. Please adopt a revised Executive Order that allows cities that are seeing a surge in new COVID-19 cases to adopt and enforce mandatory face-covering and social distancing orders.

We have taken several steps at the local level to alleviate some of the economic burden faced by our citizens. However, there are many things outlined above that only you can approve or initiate to help our unique, diverse and low-income community and we respectfully request your assistance and consideration. Thank you again for all your work and leadership during this pandemic and we stand ready to work together on real and equitable solutions.

Sincerely,
City Council Place One
Maxfield Baker

City Council Place Four
Mark Rockeymoore

City Council Place Six
Melissa Derrick