

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE

STATE CAPITOL
SACRAMENTO, CALIFORNIA
95814

May 7, 2020

The Honorable Toni Atkins
Senate President pro Tempore
State Capitol, Room 205
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Anthony Rendon
Speaker of the Assembly
State Capitol, Room 219
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear President pro Tempore Atkins and Speaker Rendon:

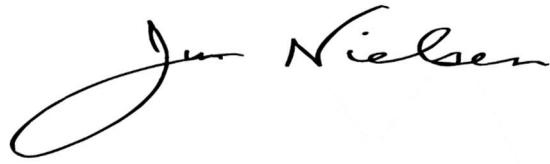
As the Legislature begins to move from crisis response to a resumption of our business, we are concerned that the broad authority we granted to Governor Newsom regarding state spending continues unchecked and seems unwise in certain circumstances. A spate of news stories within recent days have highlighted several questionable spending decisions regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) procurement. Most notably, we are concerned about the details of a rushed, half-billion contract to a company only days old and a price-per-mask contract with BYD that could be nearly 40% higher than what is available on the market. We are also learning through news reports that the state wired and then rescinded another half-billion dollars to a new company, Blue Flame, after concerns were raised about their ability to deliver on the contract. Rather than learn of these issues from the Administration as was conditioned in our authorization of emergency monies in March, we are getting delayed and incomplete reports from news stories.

At the same time, we are hearing from our constituents regarding concerns about how our government is not able to adequately support services it has explicitly stated are necessary for our state to weather the shelter and physical-distancing orders, including historic unemployment insurance claims and equally historic claim backlogs.

Our role as the equal branch of state government is to hold the other two branches to account to the people of this state. If the executive branch is not doing its job – or spending the state's resources in a way that is inconsistent with our prerogative – we have a duty to our constituents and the residents of the state of California to ask hard questions to protect our fiduciary responsibility.

We request that you immediately convene the Joint Legislative Audit Committee (JLAC) for the purpose of hearing our audit request of the state's handling of all 2020 spending on PPE, including the procurement contract with BYD. Our goal is not to hinder the necessary response to the COVID-19 pandemic but to provide the people of this state – taxpayers all – with the knowledge that we are taking care of their money when they are facing such economic uncertainty.

Respectfully,



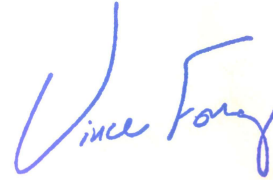
Senator Jim Nielsen, SD 4



Senator John M. W. Moorlach, SD 37



Assemblymember Devon Mathis, AD 26



Assemblymember Vince Fong, AD 34



Assemblymember Bill Brough, AD 73



Senator Andreas Borgeas, SD 8



Assemblymember Melissa A. Melendez, AD 67



Assemblymember Jim Patterson, AD 23



Senator Mike Morrell, SD 23

cc: The Honorable Gavin Newsom, Governor of California