

March 23, 2020
MDRA Legislative Update

It seems unimaginable that the devastation that offices had faced with MNLARS is now overshadowed and greatly compounded by the coronavirus outbreak. Many offices state-wide have completely suspended their operations or are offering very limited services in response. If your office remains open, please adhere to proper and routine sanitation measures as well as prudent personal distancing for the safety of your customers and staff. If your office has closed or has limited operations, you must notify DVS of these changes.

Prior to the virus outbreak, offices were still struggling financially just to break even. Our situation becomes even more dire as this pandemic continues with no known return date to normalcy. Certainly, we are not alone as wide swaths of our economy and labor force are swept up in this current crisis. The Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) is offering low-interest loans of up to \$2 million for small businesses impacted by shutdowns. For more information on this program, please visit their website at www.mn.gov/deed.

Lawmakers are acting remotely in concert with legislative leaders while the legislative session is suspended temporarily to avoid large gatherings. Governor Walz conducts daily press conferences with public updates while separately consulting and informing legislative leaders. **Future actions could even include a “shelter in place” mandate that other states have initiated.**

We anticipate abbreviated floor sessions later this week in the House and Senate to only pass legislation deemed necessary and noncontroversial specific to the outbreak. One piece of likely legislation would provide a 60-day grace period for expiring registrations, driver licenses and disability permits. This would mirror actions already taken in many other states currently. Related legislation previously heard this session regarding clarified and easier Real ID documentation requirements may also be considered.

While lawmakers remain engaged remotely during this crisis, they do want to hear from constituents and the impact it is having on them. MDRA encourages you to email your individual state representative and senator, along with key leaders listed below and inform them of your situation. Provide them with the new realities you face while trying to stabilize from MNLARS and the demands of Real ID applications. Are you closed? Offering only limited service? Have you laid off staff? What are your set expenses that can no longer be covered? God forbid, are you contemplating permanent closure?

If you are unsure who your state legislators are, visit either www.house.mn or www.senate.mn and click the link for “who represents me?” on the bottom. This link also provides federal office holder contacts who needn’t be included in this effort. One single email copied to all recipients will satisfy this request. Please also include the following senators who need to know as well:

Senator Paul Gazelka
Senator Scott Newman
Senator John Jasinski

sen.paul.gazelka@senate.mn
sen.scott.newman@senate.mn
sen.john.jasinski@senate.mn

Please copy MDRA with your communication at mndeputyregistrars@gmail.com. **This request is critical to keep deputy registrars in the mix for financial relief this session at the capitol!**

Continued

Thank you, deputies for your perseverance amidst this crisis. Be mindful to constantly adhere to public health protocols regardless whether you are open or not! We encourage your participation with tomorrow's web-ex invitation from DVS at 11am that addresses the coronavirus with a Q &A, which is scheduled every Tuesday going forward at that time. You should have been made aware of this already from DVS, and to submit questions in advance please email either MDRA president Neng Lor at neng.lor@hennepin.us or Nancy Reissner from DVS at nancy.reissner@state.mn.us.