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Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation

WHEREAS, since early March 2020, Illinois has faced a pandemic that has caused extraordinary sickness and loss of life, infecting over 1,190,000, and taking the lives of more than 20,700 residents; and,

WHEREAS, at all times but especially during a public health crisis, protecting the health and safety of Illinoisans is among the most important functions of State government; and,

WHEREAS, it is critical that Illinoisans who become sick have access to necessary care from medical professionals, including hospital beds, emergency room beds, or ventilators if needed; and,

WHEREAS, it is also critical that the State's health care and first responder workforce has adequate personal protective equipment (PPE) to safely treat patients, respond to public health disasters, and prevent the spread of communicable diseases; and,

WHEREAS, as Illinois adapts and responds to the public health disaster caused by Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), a novel severe acute respiratory illness that spreads rapidly through respiratory transmissions, the burden on residents, healthcare providers, first responders, and governments throughout the State is unprecedented; and,

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on January 30, 2020, and the United States Secretary of Health and Human Services declared that COVID-19 presents a public health emergency on January 27, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, on March 11, 2020, the World Health Organization characterized the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic, and has now reported more than 115 million confirmed cases of COVID-19 and more than 2.5 million deaths attributable to COVID-19 globally; and,

WHEREAS, despite efforts to contain COVID-19, the virus has continued to spread rapidly, resulting in the need for federal and State governments to take significant steps; and,

WHEREAS, on March 9, 2020, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of Illinois, declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area in response to the outbreak of COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, on March 13, 2020, the President declared a nationwide emergency pursuant to Section 501(b) of the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act, 42 U.S.C. 5121-5207 (the "Stafford Act"), covering all states and territories, including Illinois; and,

WHEREAS, on March 26, 2020, the President declared a major disaster in Illinois pursuant to Section 401 of the Stafford Act; and,

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2020, due to the exponential spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on April 30, 2020, due to the continued spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, the threatened shortages of hospital beds, ER beds, and ventilators, and the inadequate testing capacity, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on May 29, 2020, due to the continued spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, and the resulting health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to increase testing capacity, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on June 26, 2020, due to the further spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, the continuing health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on July 24, 2020, due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in Illinois, the continuing health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on August 21, 2020, due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in Illinois, the continuing health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on September 18, 2020, due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in Illinois, the continuing health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on October 16, 2020, due to the resurgence of COVID-19 in Illinois, the continuing health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on November 13, 2020, due to the increased spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, the continuing health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on December 11, 2020, due to the continued rapid spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, the health and economic impacts of the virus, and the need to continue to increase testing capacity and preserve our progress against the disease, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on January 8, 2021, due to the continued rapid spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, and the health and economic impacts of the virus, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, on February 5, 2021, due to the continued rapid spread of COVID-19 in Illinois, and the health and economic impacts of the virus, I declared all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area; and,

WHEREAS, as circumstances surrounding COVID-19 have evolved and new evidence emerges, there have been frequent changes in information and public health guidance; and,

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WHEREAS, the unprecedented nature of COVID-19, including the health consequences it has on not just the respiratory system but the heart, brain, kidneys, and the body's immune response, has made the virus's effects and its path difficult to predict; and,

WHEREAS, from the outset, data suggested that older adults and those with serious underlying health conditions are more likely to experience severe and sometimes fatal complications from COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, evidence has shown that young people, including infants and toddlers, are also at risk of such complications; and,

WHEREAS, young and middle-aged people have comprised a significant proportion of COVID-19 cases and hospitalized COVID-19 patients, and there is evidence that COVID-19 causes blood clots and strokes, and has caused deadly strokes in young and middle-aged people who exhibited few symptoms; and,

WHEREAS, the understanding of spread from infected individuals who have not shown symptoms has changed and, on April 12, 2020, the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) changed the period of exposure risk from "onset of symptoms" to "48 hours before symptom onset"; and,

WHEREAS, some people infected by the virus remain asymptomatic but nonetheless may spread it to others; and,

WHEREAS, although the CDC initially recommended against wearing cloth face coverings or masks as protection, as a result of research on asymptomatic and pre-symptomatic transmission, the CDC revised its conclusions and recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain; and,

WHEREAS, the CDC now advises that cloth face coverings or masks protect both the wearer and those around them from COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, public health research and guidance now indicates the necessity and efficacy of wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where social distancing measures are difficult to maintain, and indicates that the risk of transmission outdoors is less than the risk of transmission indoors; and,

WHEREAS, public health guidance advises that minimizing physical interactions between people who do not reside in the same household is critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, as COVID-19 has spread in Illinois over the course of the Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamations, the circumstances causing a disaster throughout the State have changed and continue to change, making definitive predictions of the course the virus will take over the coming months extremely difficult; and,

WHEREAS, at the time I issued the first Gubernatorial Disaster Proclamation, there were 11 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in one Illinois county; and,

WHEREAS, as of today, there have been over 1,190,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in all 102 Illinois counties; and,

WHEREAS, the first death attributed to COVID-19 in Illinois was announced on March 17, 2020; and,

WHEREAS, as of today, more than 20,700 residents of Illinois have died due to COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, from the outset, studies have suggested that for every confirmed case there are many more unknown cases, some of which are asymptomatic individuals who can pass the virus to others without knowing; and,

WHEREAS, the CDC estimates that total cases of COVID-19 may be higher than reported for certain regions; and,

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WHEREAS, while the number of new COVID-19 cases in the State has decreased over the past several weeks, the virus continues to infect thousands of individuals and claim the lives of too many Illinoisans each day; and,

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic is not limited to the most populous counties, and as of today, counties in all regions of the State are demonstrating significant COVID-19 risk; and,

WHEREAS, without precautions COVID-19 can spread exponentially, even in less populous areas; for example, in Jasper County, a single infected first responder visited a nursing home and instigated series of infections that resulted in one of highest infection rates in the State; and similarly, in Randolph County, a single infected person attended an event in mid-March that caused that county likewise to suffer one of the State's highest infection rates; and,

WHEREAS, the State and the Illinois Department of Public Health have developed a mitigation plan to trigger additional precautions when regions meet certain risk levels; and,

WHEREAS, the U.S. has surpassed 28.5 million total cases and more than 515,000 deaths; and,

WHEREAS, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of and continues to impact the health of Black and Hispanic Illinoisans at a disproportionately high rate – magnifying significant health disparities and inequities; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Public Health activated its Illinois Emergency Operations Plan and its Emergency Support Function 8 Plan to coordinate emergency response efforts by hospitals, local health departments, and emergency management systems in order to avoid a surge in the use of hospital resources and capacity; and,

WHEREAS, as the virus has progressed through Illinois, the crisis facing the State continues to develop and requires an evolving response to ensure hospitals, health care professionals and first responders are able to meet the health care needs of all Illinoisans and in a manner consistent with CDC guidance that continues to be updated; and,

WHEREAS, in order to ensure that health care professionals, first responders, hospitals and other facilities are able to meet the health care needs of all residents of Illinois, the State must have critical supplies, including PPE, such as masks, face shields, gowns, and gloves; and,

WHEREAS, the State of Illinois maintains a stockpile that supports the existing PPE supply chains and stocks at various healthcare facilities; and,

WHEREAS, while the State continues to make every effort to ensure an adequate supply of PPE, if those procurement efforts are disrupted or Illinois experiences a surge in COVID-19 cases, the State may face a life-threatening shortage of respirators, masks, protective eyewear, face shields, gloves, gowns, and other protective equipment for health care workers and first responders; and,

WHEREAS, Illinois is using a significant percentage of hospital beds and ICU beds; and, if COVID-19 cases surge, the State could face a shortage of critical health care resources; and,

WHEREAS, over the course of the COVID-19 crisis, the State has been constrained in the number of COVID-19 tests that can be taken and processed due to a limited number of testing sites and labs, as well as a shortage of necessary supplies, including the swabs needed to take samples; and,

WHEREAS, Illinois now has tested more than 18 million total specimens for COVID-19; and,

WHEREAS, in addition to causing the tragic loss of more than 20,700 Illinoisans and wreaking havoc on the physical health of tens of thousands more, COVID-19 has caused extensive economic loss and continues to threaten the financial welfare of a significant number of individuals and businesses across the nation and the State; and,

WHEREAS, nationwide, nearly 75 million people have filed unemployment claims since the start of the pandemic; and,

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WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Employment Security announced that the State's unemployment rate continues to be high; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Department of Employment Security is responding to the economic crisis in a number of ways, including through the Pandemic Unemployment Assistance program; and,

WHEREAS, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is working to address the economic crisis, including through assistance programs such as the Business Interruption Grants Program for businesses that experienced a limited ability to operate due to COVID-19 related closures; and,

WHEREAS, many executive agencies in the State have focused their limited resources on the ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic; and,

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has required the Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) to address the outbreak's impact on the State's food supply chain through regulation and oversight of meat and poultry facilities and livestock management facilities; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic's disruption to the livestock market has required IDOA to concentrate its resources on working with livestock owners and producers in addressing safe and environmental animal disposal concerns through its oversight and regulation of the Dead Animal Disposal Act; and

WHEREAS, IDOA regulates and investigates many other industries that have been directly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic including, but not limited to, pesticide applicators, animal shelters, pet shops, and gas stations, and the continued, proper regulation of these industries requires IDOA to commit additional time and resources into creating new procedures for conducting remote investigations and trainings; and

WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic's detrimental impact to IDOA's regulated industries has required IDOA to place additional time and resources into organizing and managing the timely implementation of the Business Interruption Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, the economic loss and insecurity caused by COVID-19 threatens the viability of business and the access to housing, medical care, food, and other critical resources that directly impact the health and safety of residents; and,

WHEREAS, access to housing helps prevent spread of COVID-19 because individuals with housing are able to minimize physical contact with those outside their households; and,

WHEREAS, temporarily halting eviction proceedings avoids numerous interactions associated with being evicted, including with law enforcement officers, courtroom personnel, landlords, movers, and friends and family who agree to provide temporary housing, as well as, for those who are forced into homelessness, the interactions associated with taking refuge in a shelter; and,

WHEREAS, preventing spread by temporarily halting eviction proceedings thus also prevents spread of COVID-19 in the broader community; and,

WHEREAS, COVID-19 also has been extraordinarily disruptive to schools, and it is among the highest priorities of the State to ensure that students are able to obtain a quality education and that schools are able to provide an environment that is safe for students, teachers, and the community; and,

WHEREAS, based on the foregoing facts, and considering the rapid spread of COVID-19 and the ongoing health and economic impacts that will be felt over the coming month by people across the State, the current circumstances in Illinois surrounding the spread of COVID-19 constitute an epidemic emergency and a public health emergency under Section 4 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act; and,

WHEREAS, based on the foregoing, the continuing burden on hospital resources, the ongoing potential that the State could face shortages of these resources in the event of a surge in infections, and the critical need to increase the purchase and distribution of PPE as well as to continue to

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expand COVID-19 testing capacity constitute a public health emergency under Section 4 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act; and,

WHEREAS, it is the policy of the State of Illinois to be prepared to address any disasters and, therefore, it is necessary and appropriate to make additional State resources available to ensure that that our healthcare delivery system is capable of serving those who are sick and that Illinoisans remain safe and secure and able to obtain medical care; and,

WHEREAS, this proclamation will assist the State in facilitating economic recovery for individuals and businesses in an effort to prevent further devastating consequences from the economic instability COVID-19 has caused; and,

WHEREAS, this proclamation will assist Illinois agencies in coordinating State and Federal resources, including materials needed to test for COVID-19, personal protective equipment, and medicines, in an effort to support the State responses as well as the responses of local governments to the present public health emergency; and,

WHEREAS, these conditions provide legal justification under Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act for the new issuance of a proclamation of disaster; and,

WHEREAS, the Illinois Constitution, in Article V, Section 8, provides that "the Governor shall have the supreme executive power, and shall be responsible for the faithful execution of the laws," and states, in the Preamble, that a central purpose of the Illinois Constitution is "provide for the health, safety, and welfare of the people";

NOW, THEREFORE, in the interest of aiding the people of Illinois and the local governments responsible for ensuring public health and safety, I, JB Pritzker, Governor of the State of Illinois, hereby proclaim as follows:

Section 1. Pursuant to the provisions of Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7, I find that a disaster exists within the State of Illinois and specifically declare all counties in the State of Illinois as a disaster area. The proclamation authorizes the exercise of all of the emergency powers provided in Section 7 of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7, including but not limited to those specific emergency powers set forth below.

Section 2. The Illinois Department of Public Health and the Illinois Emergency Management Agency are directed to coordinate with each other with respect to planning for and responding to the present public health emergency.

Section 3. The Illinois Department of Public Health is further directed to cooperate with the Governor, other State agencies and local authorities, including local public health authorities, in the development and implementation of strategies and plans to protect the public health in connection with the present public health emergency.

Section 4. The Illinois Emergency Management Agency is directed to implement the State Emergency Operations Plan to coordinate State resources to support local governments in disaster response and recovery operations.

Section 5. To aid with emergency purchases necessary for response and other emergency powers as authorized by the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, the provisions of the Illinois Procurement Code that would in any way prevent, hinder or delay necessary action in coping with the disaster are suspended to the extent they are not required by federal law. If necessary, and in accordance with Section 7(1) of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7(1), the Governor may take appropriate executive action to suspend additional statutes, orders, rules, and regulations.

Section 6. Pursuant to Section 7(3) of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7(3), this proclamation activates the Governor's authority, as necessary, to transfer the direction, personnel or functions of State departments and agencies or units thereof for the purpose of performing or facilitating emergency response programs.

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Section 7. The Illinois Department of Public Health, Illinois Department of Insurance and the Illinois Department of Healthcare and Family Services are directed to recommend, and, as appropriate, take necessary actions to ensure expanded access to testing for COVID-19 and that consumers do not face financial barriers in accessing diagnostic testing and treatment services for COVID-19.

Section 8. The Illinois State Board of Education is directed to recommend, and, as appropriate, take necessary actions to address any impact to learning associated with the present public health emergency and to continue to alleviate any barriers to the use of remote learning during the effect of this proclamation that exist in the Illinois School Code, 105 ILCS 5/1-1 et. seq.

Section 9. All State agencies are directed to cooperate with the Governor, other State agencies and local authorities in the development and implementation of strategies and plans to cope with and recover from the economic impact of the present public health emergency.

Section 10. Pursuant to Section 7(14) of the Illinois Emergency Management Agency Act, 20 ILCS 3305/7(14), increases in the selling price of goods or services, including medical supplies, protective equipment, medications and other commodities intended to assist in the prevention of or treatment and recovery of COVID-19, shall be prohibited in the State of Illinois while this proclamation is in effect.

Section 11. This proclamation can facilitate requests for federal emergency and/or disaster assistance if a complete and comprehensive assessment of damage indicates that effective recovery is beyond the capabilities of the State and affected local governments.

Section 12. For purposes of Public Act 101-0640, Article 15, section 15-5, amending the Open Meetings Act, new section 5 ILCS 120/7(e)(4), I find that the public health concerns at issue in this proclamation render in-person attendance of more than ten people at the regular meeting location not feasible.

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Section 13. This proclamation shall be effective immediately and remain in effect for 30 days.

In Witness Whereof, *I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Illinois to be affixed.*

Done at the Capitol in the City of Springfield this 5th day of March in the Year of Our Lord two thousand and twenty one and of the State of Illinois two hundred and third.

Jesse White
SECRETARY OF STATE

GOVERNOR

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