

TEXAS HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE



AGRICULTURE AND LIVESTOCK
COMMITTEE

RICHARD PEÑA RAYMOND

STATE REPRESENTATIVE
DISTRICT 42

March 22, 2020

Governor Greg Abbott
State Insurance Building
1100 San Jacinto
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Governor Abbott,

First of all, I want to thank you for all you are doing to help address the COVID-19 Pandemic which has infected Texas -- and virtually the whole world. As much as you are doing, I know you cannot do it alone.

I am writing to formally ask that you call a Special Session of the Legislature, so we can all do our work in helping to fight the biggest threat any of us have ever experienced.

I have talked to a lot of people, including many legislators -- Democrats and Republicans alike -- everyone is saying we will and must have a Special Session. I wholeheartedly agree. But only you can make the Special Session happen.

We must meet before hospitals and our health care system becomes overwhelmed and before our economy continues its decline. Let me also state, I am confident we can take the appropriate measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the Capitol.

I am writing to let you know I believe every single legislator stands ready to help you. I have had the opportunity to work with you on many issues in the past, such as property tax relief. However, I doubt there will be a more important issue we will ever be able to work on than stopping the COVID-19 Pandemic.

I believe you should immediately direct every agency in state government, as well as leaders from our state's health care infrastructure, education, law enforcement, local government, etc. to immediately let you and all of us in the legislature know what they can do to help, if given the legislative authority.

One of my Republican colleagues suggested, for example, that we allow or direct Appraisal Districts around the state to use 2019 appraisals for 2020 property taxes. I agree with this approach, but we need to pass a law to make it happen.

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It is just one example of a good idea from one of the 181 members of the legislature, who are willing to work with you to address this crisis.

It goes without saying, we are also going to have to help hospitals and other health care facilities, where the federal government does not provide enough help.

One of the current analysis by a reputable business organization projects that the city I represent, Laredo, Texas, could lose up to 26% of our jobs.

We can and must do everything possible to save lives and our economy. Governor, we cannot wait until January to come into legislative session. We simply cannot. Too many people will die and more and more businesses will shutter, if we wait until then. The longer we wait, the more that human pain will be felt.

First Responders all over the state are going to work every day and doing their jobs -- in spite of the threat to their own well being. The least we as legislators can do is show up and do our work as well.

I respectfully ask, as I always have when we have worked together, for you to call us into Special Session and allow us to do our part for the sake of our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard Pena Raymond". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'R' and 'P'.

Richard Pena Raymond
State Representative, Dist. 42
Laredo, Texas