

California State Senate

SENATOR
BRIAN W. JONES
THIRTY-EIGHTH SENATE DISTRICT



May 12, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom
Governor of California
State Capitol, First Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Governor Newsom,

I am requesting that you take immediate steps to allow churches, synagogues, mosques, temples and all places of worship to immediately re-open in California.

The shutdown orders that you and numerous other governors have issued are beginning to be challenged, modified and overturned in state after state.

Liberty Counsel, representing churches and churchgoers throughout the nation, has issued this memo (copy also attached) summarizing recent decisions overturning orders shutting down houses of worship:

<https://lc.org/PDFs/Memo-ReOpen-Church.pdf>

The memo concludes: ***"The government is not empowered to command under criminal or civil penalties religious worshippers when and how they should worship. Indeed, this sacred right preexisted government and therefore supersedes any dictates such government may issue. These rights are protected by both the Constitutions of the United States of America and every state constitution, and are also protected by federal and state laws."***

I encourage you and your legal advisors to review the memo from Liberty Counsel. I believe you will see the wisdom in lifting your shutdown order.

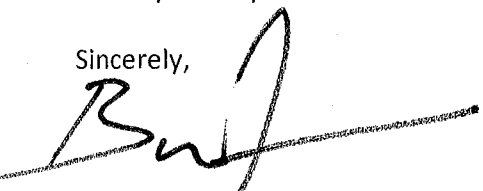
Churches, like any "essential" service are more than capable of planning for and observing CDC guidelines on social distancing and cleanliness.

As a protected right in the First Amendment to our Bill of Rights, religious facilities should have been deemed "essential" in the first place and not required to close, however they should be among the first encouraged to re-open.

Governor, in such a perilous time that we are facing with the COVID-19 pandemic, encouraging people to pursue their freedom of religious assembly is the correct and compassionate thing to do.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Brian W. Jones
Senator, District 38

cc: The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Attorney General
The Honorable Toni Atkins, Senate President pro-Tempore
The Honorable Shannon Grove, Senate Republican Leader
The Honorable Anthony Rendon, Speaker of the Assembly
The Honorable Marie Waldron, Assembly Republican Leader