

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 25, 2020

Governor Ron DeSantis
State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

On March 22, 2020, you asked President Trump to declare a Major Disaster for the State of Florida under the Stafford Act to aid the State's response to the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. While we support additional federal assistance, we are concerned that you have not yet joined many other states with ongoing community spread that have issued statewide shelter-in-place orders to protect their residents and their health care systems. We urge you to take this action in Florida in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Florida Department of Health has confirmed over 1,400 cases in our state and 20 people have died. Without an FDA-approved vaccine or treatment for COVID-19 our already-strained health care system could be overwhelmed. That is why we need a statewide order as soon as possible.

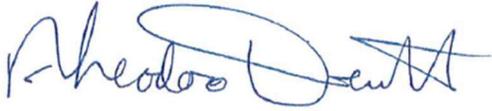
To effectively slow COVID-19's spread, we are asking you to issue a shelter-in-place order for the entire state. The order should allow only travel for essential services like grocery stores and health care providers, and to and from the workplace for critical workers. California, Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Illinois, Indiana, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, Ohio, Oregon, Washington, West Virginia, and Wisconsin have already issued similar orders. With the highest concentration of older residents of any state, Florida is at even greater risk of serious impacts on the health of our residents and burden on our health care system.

While we appreciate the state's efforts to expand testing, it is not enough to provide a full understanding of the spread of COVID-19 across Florida. We are committed to doing everything we can to support the expansion of testing efforts in Congress, but we cannot wait for testing access, personal protective equipment, swabs, and other essential items before we take necessary action to slow the spread.

We understand the grave economic consequences this action will have. But hoping to dull the impacts on the economy in the short term by delaying a shelter-in-place order will only exacerbate those impacts in the medium and long term. Instead, we must accept the necessity of shelter-in-place order now while Congress works quickly to pass an economic stimulus bill that will save jobs, replace lost incomes, and support all Americans. In the long run, the cost of preventive action will save trillions of dollars and save lives.

We cannot wait. We cannot leave this decision to county and local governments. We need your leadership. We strongly urge you to immediately issue a statewide shelter-in-place order.

Sincerely,



Ted Deutch
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Frederica S. Wilson
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



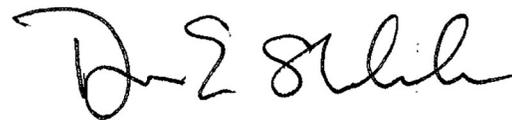
Darren Soto
MEMBER OF CONGRESS



Alcee L. Hastings
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Donna E. Shalala
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/s/

Val Demings
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Stephanie Murphy
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