

RETURN TO “NORMAL?”

TEN ISSUES TO CONSIDER IN THE POST-COVID WORKPLACE



How do you deal with an employee who is afraid to come back to the office, comes in but refuses to wear a mask, refuses to work with anyone without a mask, or refuses to work with anyone who has not been vaccinated?



RETURN TO "NORMAL?"

What to do with a “long hauler” with serious continuing symptoms after COVID-19?



RETURN TO “NORMAL?”

Who is liable if an employee tests positive for COVID-19 and may have contracted it from a fellow employee?



RETURN TO "NORMAL?"

Are employers allowed to demand or just merely encourage their employees to get vaccinated?



The answer is?

RETURN TO "NORMAL?"

Can we require proof of vaccination before allowing employees to return to work?

COVID-19 Vaccination Record Card
Please keep this record card, which includes medical information about the vaccines you have received.

Last Name _____ First Name _____

Date of Birth _____

Vaccination Record

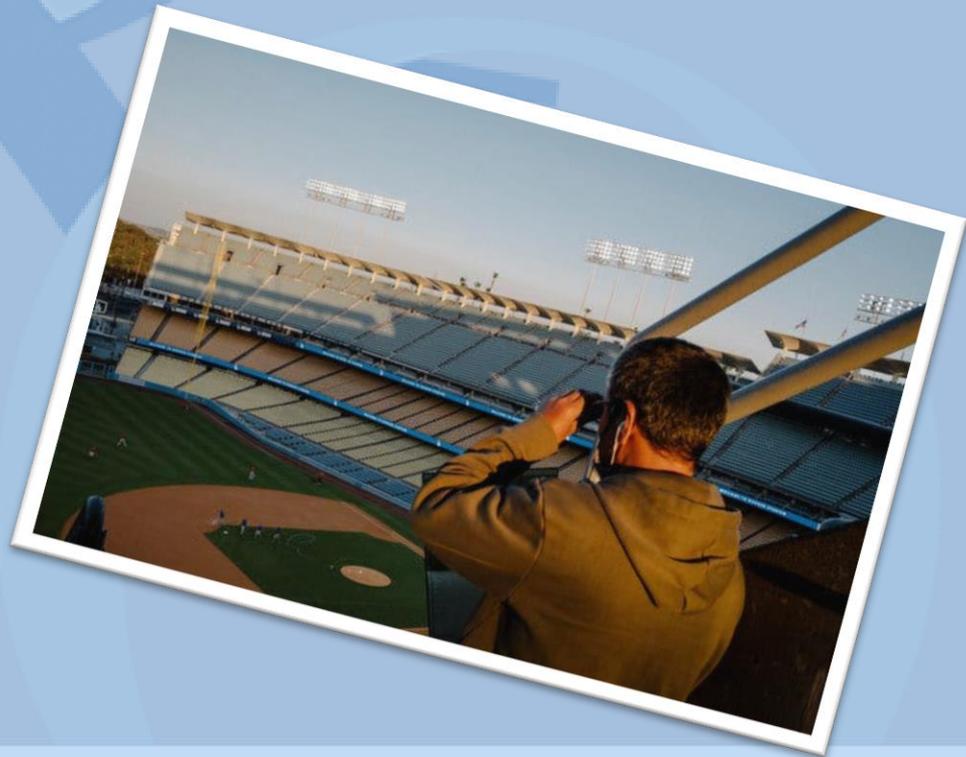
1st DOSE COVID-19	_____	____/____/____ yy
2nd DOSE COVID-19	_____	____/____/____ mm dd yy

APPROVED



RETURN TO "NORMAL?"

Can we have a vaccine section for employees if they have had the COVID vaccine?



RETURN TO "NORMAL?"

What if you have an employee who cannot be vaccinated, but traveling and working in crowded areas is required for his job?



RETURN TO "NORMAL?"

How does the FMLA come into play now that “COVID leave” is over?



RETURN TO “NORMAL?”

Is there such a thing as “for cause” COVID testing?



RETURN TO “NORMAL?”

Executive Order No. GA-34 relating to the opening of Texas in response to the COVID-19 disaster.



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

March 2, 2021

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
1:15 PM '21

MAR 02 2021

Secretary of State

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughs
Secretary of State
State Capitol Room 1E.8
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Secretary Hughs:

Pursuant to his powers as Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott has issued the following:

Executive Order No. GA-34 relating to the opening of Texas in response to the COVID-19 disaster.

The original executive order is attached to this letter of transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Davidson
Executive Clerk to the Governor

GSD/gsd

Attachment

Executive Order

BY THE
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

Executive Department
Austin, Texas
March 2, 2021

EXECUTIVE ORDER
GA 34

Relating to the opening of Texas in response to the COVID-19 disaster.

WHEREAS, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, in each subsequent month effective through today, I have renewed the disaster declaration for all Texas counties; and

WHEREAS, I have issued executive orders and suspensions of Texas laws in response to COVID-19, aimed at protecting the health and safety of Texans and ensuring an effective response to this disaster; and

WHEREAS, I issued Executive Order GA-08 on March 19, 2020, mandating social-distancing restrictions in accordance with guidelines promulgated by President Donald J. Trump and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, I subsequently issued a series of superseding executive orders aiming to achieve the least restrictive means of combatting the evolving threat to public health by adjusting social-distancing restrictions while implementing a safe, strategic plan to reopen Texas; and

WHEREAS, under Executive Order GA-32, in effect since October 14, 2020, most establishments have been able to operate up to at least 75 percent of total occupancy, except in some areas with high hospitalizations as defined in that order, where most establishments have been able to operate up to at least 50 percent of total occupancy; and

WHEREAS, I also issued Executive Order GA-29, regarding the use of face coverings to control the spread of COVID-19, and a series of executive orders, most recently GA-31, limiting certain medical surgeries and procedures; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 hospitalizations and the rate of new COVID-19 cases have steadily declined due to the millions of Texans who have voluntarily been vaccinated, many more who are otherwise immune, improved medical treatments for COVID-19 patients, abundant supplies of testing and personal protective equipment, and Texans' adherence to safe practices like social distancing, hand sanitizing, and use of face coverings; and

WHEREAS, in the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, the legislature charged the governor with the responsibility "for meeting ... the dangers to the state and people presented by

Governor Greg Abbott
March 2, 2021

Executive Order GA-34
Page 2

disasters" under Section 418.011 of the Texas Government Code, and expressly granted the governor broad authority to fulfill that responsibility; and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.012, the "governor may issue executive orders ... hav[ing] the force and effect of law;"

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, and in accordance with guidance from medical advisors, do hereby order the following on a statewide basis effective at 12:01 a.m. on March 10, 2021:

1. In all counties not in an area with high hospitalizations as defined below:
 - a. there are no COVID-19-related operating limits for any business or other establishment; and
 - b. individuals are strongly encouraged to wear face coverings over the nose and mouth wherever it is not feasible to maintain six feet of social distancing from another person not in the same household, but no person may be required by any jurisdiction to wear or to mandate the wearing of a face covering.

"Area with high hospitalizations" means any Trauma Service Area that has had seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity exceeds 15 percent, until such time as the Trauma Service Area has seven consecutive days in which the number of COVID-19 hospitalized patients as a percentage of total hospital capacity is 15 percent or less. A current list of areas with high hospitalizations will be maintained at www.dshs.texas.gov/ga3031.
2. In any county located in an area with high hospitalizations as defined above:
 - a. there are no state-imposed COVID-19-related operating limits for any business or other establishment;
 - b. there is no state-imposed requirement to wear a face covering; and
 - c. the county judge may use COVID-19-related mitigation strategies; *provided, however, that:*
 - i. business and other establishments may not be required to operate at less than 50 percent of total occupancy, with no operating limits allowed to be imposed for religious services (including those conducted in churches, congregations, and houses of worship), public and private schools and institutions of higher education, and child-care services;
 - ii. no jurisdiction may impose confinement in jail as a penalty for violating any order issued in response to COVID-19; and
 - iii. no jurisdiction may impose a penalty of any kind for failure to wear a face covering or failure to mandate that customers or employees wear face coverings, except that a legally authorized official may act to enforce trespassing laws and remove violators at the request of a business establishment or other property owner.
3. In providing or obtaining services, every person (including individuals, businesses, and other legal entities) is strongly encouraged to use good-faith efforts and available resources to follow the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) health recommendations, found at www.dshs.texas.gov/coronavirus.
4. Nothing in this executive order precludes businesses or other establishments from requiring employees or customers to follow additional hygiene measures, including the wearing of a face covering.
5. Nursing homes, state supported living centers, assisted living facilities, and long-

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term care facilities should follow guidance from the Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) regarding visitations, and should follow infection control policies and practices set forth by HHSC, including minimizing the movement of staff between facilities whenever possible.

6. Public schools may operate as provided by, and under the minimum standard health protocols found in, guidance issued by the Texas Education Agency. Private schools and institutions of higher education are encouraged to establish similar standards.
7. County and municipal jails should follow guidance from the Texas Commission on Jail Standards regarding visitations.
8. Executive Orders GA-17, GA-25, GA-29, and GA-31 are rescinded in their entirety.
9. This executive order shall supersede any conflicting order issued by local officials in response to the COVID-19 disaster, but only to the extent that such a local order restricts services allowed by this executive order or allows gatherings restricted by this executive order. Pursuant to Section 418.016(a) of the Texas Government Code, I hereby suspend Sections 418.1015(b) and 418.108 of the Texas Government Code, Chapter 81, Subchapter E of the Texas Health and Safety Code, and any other relevant statutes, to the extent necessary to ensure that local officials do not impose restrictions in response to the COVID-19 disaster that are inconsistent with this executive order, provided that local officials may enforce this executive order as well as local restrictions that are consistent with this executive order.
10. All existing state executive orders relating to COVID-19 are amended to eliminate confinement in jail as an available penalty for violating the executive orders. To the extent any order issued by local officials in response to the COVID-19 disaster would allow confinement in jail as an available penalty for violating a COVID-19-related order, that order allowing confinement in jail is superseded, and I hereby suspend all relevant laws to the extent necessary to ensure that local officials do not confine people in jail for violating any executive order or local order issued in response to the COVID-19 disaster.

This executive order supersedes Executive Orders GA-17, GA-25, GA-29, GA-31, and GA-32, but does not supersede Executive Orders GA-10 or GA-13. This executive order shall remain in effect and in full force unless it is modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded by the governor. This executive order may also be amended by proclamation of the governor.



Given under my hand this the 2nd
day of March, 2021.

Handwritten signature of Greg Abbott in black ink.

GREG ABBOTT
Governor

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SECRETARY OF STATE
1:15pm O'CLOCK
MAR 02 2021

ATTESTED BY:

Handwritten signature of Ruth R. Hughes in black ink.

RUTH R. HUGHES
Secretary of State

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1:15pm O'CLOCK
MAR 02 2021



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

April 5, 2021

FILED IN THE OFFICE OF THE
SECRETARY OF STATE
1:30 PM
O'CLOCK
APR 05 2021
Secretary of State

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughs
Secretary of State
State Capitol Room 1E.8
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Secretary Hughs:

Pursuant to his powers as Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott has issued the following:

Executive Order No. GA-35 relating to COVID-19 vaccines and the protection of
Texans' private health information.

The original executive order is attached to this letter of transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Davidson
Executive Clerk to the Governor

GSD/md

Attachment

Executive Order

BY THE
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

Executive Department
Austin, Texas
April 5, 2021

EXECUTIVE ORDER
GA 35

*Relating to COVID-19 vaccines and the protection
of Texans' private health information.*

WHEREAS, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, in each subsequent month effective through today, I have renewed the disaster declaration for all Texas counties; and

WHEREAS, I have issued executive orders and suspensions of Texas laws in response to COVID-19, aimed at protecting the health and safety of Texans and ensuring an effective response to this disaster; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted emergency use authorizations for COVID-19 vaccines that are not yet FDA-approved, pursuant to the Project BioShield Act of 2004, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3; and

WHEREAS, that federal statute expressly recognizes that each individual has "the option to accept or refuse administration of the product" under an emergency use authorization, 21 U.S.C. § 360bbb-3(e)(1)(A)(ii)(III); and

WHEREAS, receiving one of these COVID-19 vaccines under an emergency use authorization, while strongly encouraged, is always voluntary in Texas and will never be mandated by the government; and

WHEREAS, Texas has administered over 12 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccines, and every person who is at least 16 years old is now eligible to receive a shot if they so choose; and

WHEREAS, millions more Texans have already recovered from COVID-19 and thus acquired some degree of immunity; and

WHEREAS, some Texans are still waiting to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, while others will opt out altogether due to a religious objection, a health concern, or some other reason; and

WHEREAS, an individual's COVID-19 vaccination status is private health information, and no governmental entity should compel disclosure of this information by mandating a so-called "vaccine passport" for COVID-19 or by otherwise conditioning receipt of

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APR 05 2021

services on an individual's COVID-19 vaccination status; and

WHEREAS, the Constitution does not empower the federal government to mandate nationwide vaccine passports for COVID-19, and Texas will not impose such vaccine passports with the police power that is reserved to the States under our system of federalism; and

WHEREAS, I request that the 87th Legislature address this important privacy issue in the current legislative session; and

WHEREAS, in the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, the legislature charged the governor with the responsibility "for meeting ... the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters" under Section 418.011 of the Texas Government Code, and expressly granted the governor broad authority to fulfill that responsibility; and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.012, the "governor may issue executive orders ... hav[ing] the force and effect of law;" and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.016(a), the "governor may suspend the provisions of any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business ... if strict compliance with the provisions ... would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with a disaster;" and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.018(c), the "governor may control ingress and egress to and from a disaster area and the movement of persons and the occupancy of premises in the area;"

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, do hereby order the following on a statewide basis effective immediately:

1. I hereby suspend Section 81.082(f)(1) of the Texas Health and Safety Code to the extent necessary to ensure that no governmental entity can compel any individual to receive a COVID-19 vaccine administered under an emergency use authorization.
2. State agencies and political subdivisions shall not adopt or enforce any order, ordinance, policy, regulation, rule, or similar measure that requires an individual to provide, as a condition of receiving any service or entering any place, documentation regarding the individual's vaccination status for any COVID-19 vaccine administered under an emergency use authorization. I hereby suspend Section 81.085(j) of the Texas Health and Safety Code to the extent necessary to enforce this prohibition. This paragraph does not apply to any documentation requirements necessary for the administration of a COVID-19 vaccine.
3. Any public or private entity that is receiving or will receive public funds through any means, including grants, contracts, loans, or other disbursements of taxpayer money, shall not require a consumer to provide, as a condition of receiving any service or entering any place, documentation regarding the consumer's vaccination status for any COVID-19 vaccine administered under an emergency use authorization. No consumer may be denied entry to a facility financed in whole or in part by public funds for failure to provide

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documentation regarding the consumer's vaccination status for any COVID-19 vaccine administered under an emergency use authorization.

4. Nothing in this executive order shall be construed to limit the ability of a nursing home, state supported living center, assisted living facility, or long-term care facility to require documentation of a resident's vaccination status for any COVID-19 vaccine.
5. This executive order shall supersede any conflicting order issued by local officials in response to the COVID-19 disaster. I hereby suspend Sections 418.1015(b) and 418.108 of the Texas Government Code, Chapter 81, Subchapter E of the Texas Health and Safety Code, and any other relevant statutes, to the extent necessary to ensure that local officials do not impose restrictions in response to the COVID-19 disaster that are inconsistent with this executive order.

This executive order does not supersede Executive Orders GA-10, GA-13, or GA-34. This executive order shall remain in effect and in full force unless it is modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded by the governor.

Given under my hand this the 5th
day of April, 2021.



GREG ABBOTT
Governor



ATTESTED BY:



RUTH R. HUGHES
Secretary of State

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SECRETARY OF STATE
1:30 PM
APR 05 2021



GOVERNOR GREG ABBOTT

May 18, 2021

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12:15 PM '21
MAY 18 2021
Secretary of State

The Honorable Ruth R. Hughs
Secretary of State
State Capitol Room 1E.8
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Secretary Hughs:

Pursuant to his powers as Governor of the State of Texas, Greg Abbott has issued the following:

Executive Order No. GA-36 relating to the prohibition of governmental entities and officials from mandating face coverings or restricting activities in response to the COVID-19 disaster.

The original executive order is attached to this letter of transmittal.

Respectfully submitted,

Gregory S. Davidson
Executive Clerk to the Governor
GSD/gsd

Attachment

POST OFFICE BOX 12428 AUSTIN, TEXAS 78711 512-463-2000 (VOICE) DIAL 7-1-1 FOR RELAY SERVICES

Executive Order

BY THE
GOVERNOR OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

Executive Department
Austin, Texas
May 18, 2021

EXECUTIVE ORDER
GA 36

Relating to the prohibition of governmental entities and officials from mandating face coverings or restricting activities in response to the COVID-19 disaster.

WHEREAS, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, issued a disaster proclamation on March 13, 2020, certifying under Section 418.014 of the Texas Government Code that the novel coronavirus (COVID-19) poses an imminent threat of disaster for all counties in the State of Texas; and

WHEREAS, I issued Executive Order GA-34 on March 2, 2021, to open Texas 100 percent and remove face-covering requirements; and

WHEREAS, since then, COVID-19 hospitalizations and the rate of new COVID-19 cases have continued their steady decline; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order GA-34 specifically provides that "no person may be required by any jurisdiction to wear or to mandate the wearing of a face covering," and, notwithstanding that order, some local governmental entities have caused confusion by nonetheless purporting to require face coverings; and

WHEREAS, Executive Order GA-34 also provides that "there are no COVID-19-related operating limits for any business or other establishment," that any "conflicting order issued by local officials in response to the COVID-19 disaster" is superseded, and that all relevant statutes are suspended to the extent necessary to preclude inconsistent local orders; and

WHEREAS, to further ensure statewide uniformity, and based on the continued improvement of conditions in Texas, revised standards are appropriate to achieve the least restrictive means of combatting COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, in the Texas Disaster Act of 1975, the legislature charged the governor with the responsibility "for meeting ... the dangers to the state and people presented by disasters" under Section 418.011 of the Texas Government Code, and expressly granted the governor broad authority to fulfill that responsibility; and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.012, the "governor may issue executive orders ... hav[ing] the force and effect of law;" and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.016(a), the "governor may suspend the provisions of any regulatory statute prescribing the procedures for conduct of state business ... if strict compliance with the provisions ... would in any way prevent, hinder, or delay necessary action in coping with a disaster;" and

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WHEREAS, under Section 418.018(c), the “governor may control ingress and egress to and from a disaster area and the movement of persons and the occupancy of premises in the area;” and

WHEREAS, under Section 418.173, the legislature authorized as “an offense,” punishable by a fine up to \$1,000, any “failure to comply with the [state emergency management plan] or with a rule, order, or ordinance adopted under the plan;”

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Greg Abbott, Governor of Texas, by virtue of the power and authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the State of Texas, do hereby order the following on a statewide basis effective immediately:

1. No governmental entity, including a county, city, school district, and public health authority, and no governmental official may require any person to wear a face covering or to mandate that another person wear a face covering; provided, however, that:
 - a. state supported living centers, government-owned hospitals, and government-operated hospitals may continue to use appropriate policies regarding the wearing of face coverings; and
 - b. the Texas Department of Criminal Justice, the Texas Juvenile Justice Department, and any county and municipal jails acting consistent with guidance by the Texas Commission on Jail Standards may continue to use appropriate policies regarding the wearing of face coverings.
2. Notwithstanding the above, public schools may continue to follow policies regarding the wearing of face coverings to the extent reflected in current guidance by the Texas Education Agency, until June 4, 2021. The Texas Education Agency shall revise its guidance such that, effective 11:59 p.m. on June 4, 2021, no student, teacher, parent, or other staff member or visitor may be required to wear a face covering.
3. This executive order shall supersede any face-covering requirement imposed by any local governmental entity or official, except as explicitly provided in paragraph numbers 1-2. To the extent necessary to ensure that local governmental entities or officials do not impose any such face-covering requirements, I hereby suspend the following:
 - a. Sections 418.1015(b) and 418.108 of the Texas Government Code;
 - b. Chapter 81, Subchapter E of the Texas Health and Safety Code;
 - c. Chapters 121, 122, and 341 of the Texas Health and Safety Code;
 - d. Chapter 54 of the Texas Local Government Code; and
 - e. any other statute invoked by any local governmental entity or official in support of a face-covering requirement.

Pursuant to the legislature’s command in Section 418.173 of the Texas Government Code and the State’s emergency management plan, the imposition of any such face-covering requirement by a local governmental entity or official constitutes a “failure to comply with” this executive order that is subject to a fine up to \$1,000, beginning at 11:59 p.m. on May 21, 2021.

4. Under Executive Order GA-34, business activities and legal proceedings are free to proceed without COVID-19-related limitations imposed by local governmental entities or officials, in all counties not in an area of high hospitalizations as defined in that executive order. Executive Order GA-34 also superseded any conflicting local order in response to the COVID-19 disaster, and directed that all relevant laws

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are suspended to the extent necessary to preclude any such inconsistent local orders. Pursuant to the legislature’s command in Section 418.173 of the Texas Government Code and the State’s emergency management plan, the imposition of any conflicting or inconsistent limitation by a local governmental entity or official constitutes a “failure to comply with” this executive order that is subject to a fine up to \$1,000, beginning at 11:59 p.m. on May 21, 2021.

This executive order supersedes subparagraph numbers 1(b) and 2(c)(iii) of Executive Order GA-34, but does not otherwise supersede Executive Orders GA-10, GA-13, GA-34, or GA-35. This executive order shall remain in effect and in full force unless it is modified, amended, rescinded, or superseded by the governor. This executive order may also be amended by proclamation of the governor.



Given under my hand this the 18th
day of May, 2021.


GREG ABBOTT
Governor

ATTESTED BY:


RUTH R. HUGHES
Secretary of State

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SECRETARY OF STATE
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MAY 18 2021