



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA
Office of the Governor

Ralph S. Northam
Governor

May 26, 2020

The Honorable Levar M. Stoney
Mayor, City of Richmond
900 E. Broad Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219

Dear Mayor Stoney:

I am writing to acknowledge your phone call this morning and the letter that soon followed, in which you request modifications to the Phase 1 guidelines that apply to every other city and county in Virginia starting Friday.

You wrote that that many faith leaders and operators of barber shops and salons “have told [you] that they...do not intend to reopen” in Phase 1.

I understand this perspective, and I would point out that nothing requires any house of worship or any private business to open if they do not want to. Just because a business can open, does not mean that it must open. For these reasons, I believe the capital city should operate under the same provisions that will apply to all 138 Virginia localities starting Friday. This forces no business or house of worship to take any action it does not want to take.

If you wish to pursue additional restrictions on houses of worship, barber shops, or hair salons, I encourage you to work with your City Council to take the emergency actions allowed by the Richmond charter, which [authorizes the City](#) to “make and enforce all regulations necessary to

The Honorable Levar M. Stoney

May 26, 2020

Page Two

preserve and promote public health and sanitation and protect the inhabitants of the city from contagious, infectious or other diseases.”

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ralph S. Northam". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Ralph S. Northam