

COVID-19
State
Actions

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Looking
Forward



Legislative Update

March 20, 2020



COVID-19 STATE ACTIONS

H.4014 - DHEC COVID-19 State Funding

- On March 12, Gov. McMaster asked the South Carolina legislature to appropriate \$45 million for the Department of Health and Environmental Control (DHEC) from the Contingency Reserve Fund for COVID-19 response.
- The Senate came into session on Tuesday and unanimously amended an existing bill - H.4014 - to appropriate \$45 million to the "COVID-19 Response Account" to be used by DHEC.
- The House came into session on Thursday from a previously scheduled furlough and concurred unanimously in the Senate amendment - allowing the bill to go to the Governor.
- Gov. McMaster signed the bill yesterday afternoon.
- DHEC has stated the money will be used for new equipment, the distribution of educational materials, money to pay new workers at hospitals, and the expansion of quarantines if more cases are reported.

Governor's Executive Orders

Mandates:

- All schools closed until March 31st
- Public universities, colleges, and technical colleges move to online instruction for the rest of the spring semester – college president determine essential personnel
- One-week waiting period waived for individuals who are eligible to file for unemployment benefits due to loss of employment or reduction of hours due to COVID-19
- Deadline extended to June 1 for employers to file unemployment insurance taxes on Q1 wage earnings without interest
- SCDOR to extend state tax deadlines until June 1 without penalty and interest
- All restaurant and bars to shut down dine-in (take out only) - started Wed. March 18
- All gatherings in public places with over 50 people must be canceled, postponed, or conducted virtually
- National Guard to make plans for hospital needs including building temporary medical facilities
- DHEC to lower some regulations for medical staff and hospitals and temporarily suspend Certificate of Need regulation enforcement as necessary for treatment of COVID-19
- All non-essential state employees should stay home from work – agency heads determine non-essential
- Procurement regulations suspended for state agencies so they can get people, supplies, etc.
- County and municipal government must allow state government facilities unlimited access to the buildings in which state agencies housed

Governor's Executive Orders (Cont.)

Requests:

- All elective and non-essential surgeries and procedures halt for at least 72 hours
- Insurance companies cover 100% of visits related to COVID-19
- All medical visits (non COVID-19) that can be conducted over telehealth should be
- Grocery stores limit customer purchases of essential items
- “Senior hours” for grocery stores
- SC hospitals immediately restrict overnight visits to patients
- SC residents use common sense and treat neighbors with compassion – stay home and don’t hoard supplies

SBA Request

- Governor McMaster requested federal assistance for South Carolina small businesses from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA).
- Any Economic Injury Disaster Loan Assistance Declaration issued by the SBA makes loans available to small businesses and private, non-profit organizations in designated areas of a state or territory to help alleviate economic injury caused by the Coronavirus (COVID-19).
- The SBA issued the Declaration for South Carolina late yesterday.

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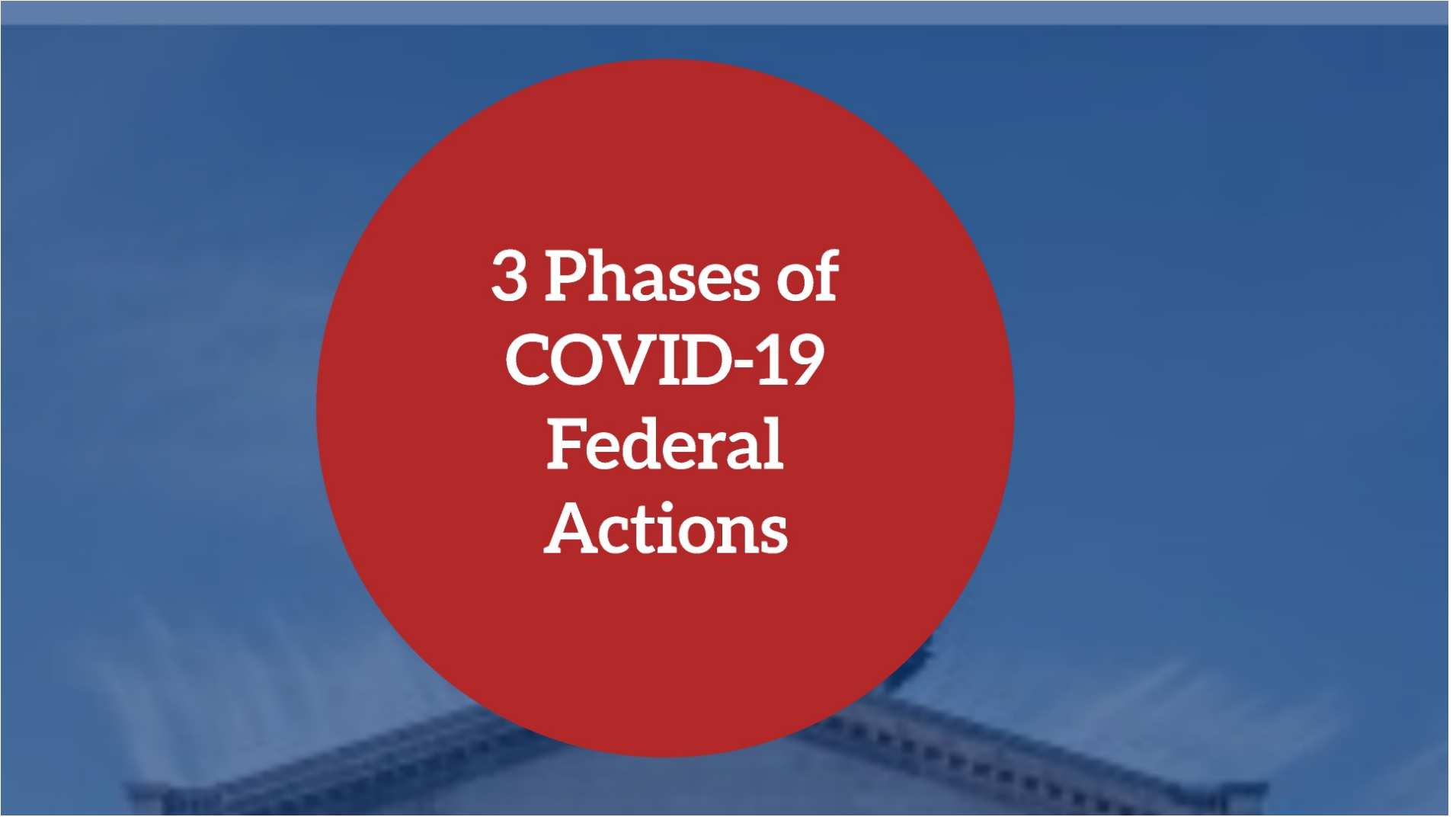
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THE CHAMPION FOR BUSINESS

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3 Phases of COVID-19 Federal Actions

Phase 1

- \$8.3 Billion appropriation bill for Coronavirus vaccine research and development.
- Bill also helps fund agencies working to contain and prevent the virus.
- President Trump signed the bill on Friday, March 6.

Phase 2 - H.R. 6201

- Congress passed H.R. 6201, the "Families First Coronavirus Response Act," this week and the President signed the bill on Wed. night (Mar 18). Highlights include:
 - **Unemployment Compensation**
 - States have more flexibility over waiting periods & tests for Unemployment Compensation (U.C.) eligibility. Some states, will also have unemployment benefits extend past the normal 26 weeks - funded by the fed. government.
 - **Paid Sick Leave**
 - Employers with <500 employees mandated to provide two weeks of paid sick leave to employees effected by COVID-19, including an employee who is a caregiver for a child whose school or daycare is closed.
 - **Paid Family and Medical Leave (FMLA)**
 - Employers with <500 employees required to provide employees with up to 12 weeks of paid FMLA if they are unable to work or telework because of a public health emergency and cannot care for their children if schools are closed, or their daycare is unavailable.
- For more detailed explanation, please read the Chamber's summary here: <http://bit.ly/3dg7edZ> or sign up for the webinar we are hosting, which will occur at 3pm today.

Phase 3 - Economic Stimulus Package

- Phase 3 of Congress's response is expected to be the passage of a large economic stimulus package.
- US Senate Republicans released a \$1-trillion economic stimulus plan yesterday, which details a proposal to distribute a \$1,200 payment for each individual or \$2,400 for joint returns.
- Stimulus package proposed by the U.S. Department of Treasury includes:
 - Money for the airline industry
 - Money for critical sectors
 - Payments to individual taxpayers
 - Money for small business loans

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- Continue to visit the Chamber's COVID-19 web page for information at <https://www.scchamber.net/covid-19-resources>
- Webinar TODAY at 3 pm with Fisher Phillips employment attorneys to discuss implications of H.R. 6201 and Gov. McMaster's recent orders

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