

Office of the Governor
State of Louisiana

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GOVERNOR



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August 7, 2020

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Trump:

You have most recently approved the continuation of up to 1,100 members of the Louisiana National Guard in Title 32, United States Code Section 502(f) status through December 31, 2020 funded at 75 percent. I write to request this authorization be reconsidered to cover 100 percent funding through December 31, 2020, in response to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

The State of Louisiana remains at a critical phase of its efforts against the virus, and the support of the National Guard remains essential. As of the time of this letter, Louisiana continues in an extended Phase 2 status due to the recent spike of COVID-19 positive cases statewide which is reflected in Louisiana's ranking of number 1 in cases per capita. This Phase 2 extension has prevented food banks across the state from accessing their normal pool of volunteers, making the National Guard's ability to support food bank operations an important public service, particularly to underserved populations. Additionally, two areas within Louisiana were identified as "hot spots" by DHHS allowing Louisiana to administer an additional 120,000 tests in these two areas.

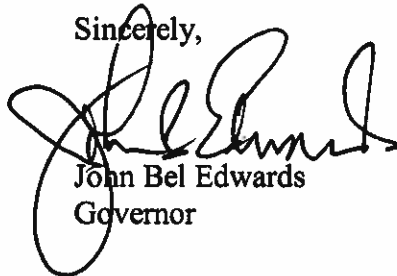
The National Guard has been critical to Louisiana's ability to make community-based testing available statewide ensuring these tests were administered to critical zip codes identifying hot spots to address community spread. In an effort to better assess the viral spread, the Louisiana Department of Health has an initiative to target select population centers with up to 5,000 community-based tests daily. Sustained community based testing is essential in developing an accurate timeline to safely transition to Phase 3. Additionally, as schools begin reopening in August 2020, requests for assistance in protective equipment distribution have increased. The Louisiana National Guard provides all these capabilities, having supported the testing of over 181,266 citizens, reception and distribution of over 48 million items of personal protective equipment, and foodbank distribution of over 10.8 million pounds of food. Although much has been accomplished, there remains much yet to accomplish.

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Understanding that Florida and Texas were extended with 100 percent funding for Title 32, the Louisiana Department of Health provided critical data and comparisons to highlight the tenuous nature of what Louisiana is facing with this pandemic which are enclosed with this request. The public health emergency in Louisiana is significantly greater than that of Florida or Texas. Utilizing data available from each state health department, cumulative COVID-19 case incidence and the cumulative COVID-19 death rate are higher in Louisiana than Florida and Texas, with Louisiana's death rate due to COVID-19 being higher than Florida and Texas combined. The most recent state-specific data from CDC on MIS-C is available in case count ranges. According to CDC, Louisiana has a higher number of MIS-C cases than both Florida and Texas.

As stated in your Presidential Memorandums, the need for close cooperation and mutual assistance between the Federal Government and the State of Louisiana remains essential. Your approval will enable the National Guard's role in meeting phased testing goals, distribution of protective equipment, and statewide foodbank operations. I will continue to responsibly size our response force based on critical needs, and continue to reassess the State's capacity as the situation unfolds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J" and a long, sweeping horizontal stroke at the end.

John Bel Edwards
Governor

Enclosure

COVID-19 Comparison: Louisiana, Texas, and Florida

COVID-19 Cases and Deaths:

According to data published on state health department websites, both the cumulative COVID-19 case incidence and the cumulative COVID-19 death rate are higher in Louisiana than Florida and Texas.

COVID-19 cumulative incidence per 100,000 population

State	COVID-19 Cases	Population Estimate	COVID-19 Incidence
LA	125,943	4,659,978	2,703
TX	459,887	28,701,845	1,602
FL	497,181	21,299,325	2,334

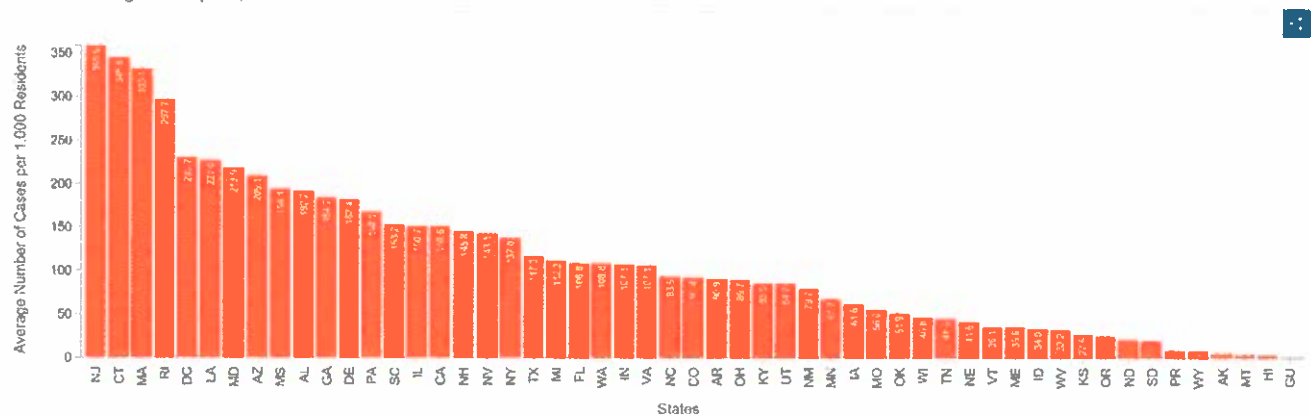
COVID-19 cumulative deaths per 100,000 population

State	COVID-19 Deaths	Population Estimate	COVID-19 Death Rate
LA	3,978	4,659,978	85
TX	7,497	28,701,845	26
FL	7,627	21,299,325	36

COVID-19 among nursing home residents:

According to data published by CMS, Louisiana has a higher rate of COVID-19 among nursing home residents than both Florida and Texas. CMS reports that the average number of cases per 1000 residents in LA is 227, compared to 117.3 in Texas and 108.8 in FL.

Resident Average Cases per 1,000 Residents



Multi-system inflammatory syndrome in Children (MIS-C) associated with COVID-19:

The most recent state-specific data from CDC on MIS-C is available in case count ranges. According to CDC, Louisiana has a higher number of MIS-C cases than both Florida and Texas: Louisiana 21-30 cases, Florida 11-20, Texas 1-10 cases.

Since the most recent update provided to CDC, Louisiana has confirmed 15 additional MIS-C cases with a current total of 45.