

Office of the Governor  
State of Louisiana

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GOVERNOR



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October 27, 2020

**VIA HAND DELIVERY**

Honorable Clay J. Schexnayder  
Speaker of the House  
Louisiana House of Representatives  
Post Office Box 94062  
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70804-9062

RE: Veto of House Bill 4 of the 2020 Second Extraordinary Session

Dear Speaker Schexnayder:

Please be advised that I have vetoed House Bill 4 of the 2020 Second Extraordinary Session.

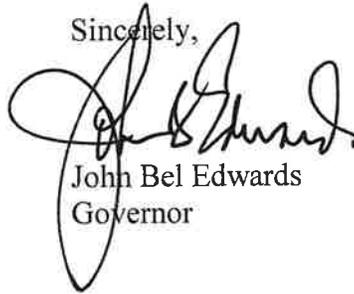
While this Extraordinary Session was purportedly called to address the COVID-19 emergency and the Health Emergency Powers Act (La. R.S. 29:760, *et seq.*), House Bill 4 is the only bill related to my emergency authority that passed the Legislature. When this bill was presented for concurrence on the House floor by Representative Blake Miguez, he hailed this bill as a compromise relating to my authority to manage the COVID-19 emergency. However, this bill certainly is not a compromise, nor is it a reasonable approach to the management of this, or any other, emergency. Most problematic, this bill would call for legislative members to vote on each mitigation measure taken in response to this emergency. I have said repeatedly that an emergency cannot be managed by committee, and that is exactly what this bill would allow. Even worse, instead of requiring members to be present at the Capitol and fully informed to make decisions, this bill allows for legislators to cast votes on life or death decisions from their homes via text message. This bill simply does not represent a serious approach to responding to a public health emergency.

Most importantly, were this bill to become law, it would put at risk all of the gains the State of Louisiana has made since the challenging days in March and April, and then again in late June and early July, when Louisiana led the nation in per capita cases. The measures that have been taken in response to those spikes in cases, in concert with the recommendations from the White House Coronavirus Task Force, have allowed Louisiana to avoid going down the same road as many other states, including our neighboring states, currently seeing dramatic increases in case positivity, hospitalizations, and deaths. The proponents of this bill did not present any plan about how they would propose to manage this emergency. Nor are they able to demonstrate where at any point I have made decisions that have not been led by the science and expert advice. The people of Louisiana deserve decisions from their leaders that are guided by principles, not politics. This should be especially so during this historic emergency.

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As I have done throughout Louisiana's response to COVID-19, I will continue to work and consult with you and the legislative leadership and will seriously consider any recommendations that would allow for the State to maintain the critical, lifesaving progress we have made.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Bel Edwards". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

John Bel Edwards  
Governor

cc: Honorable Patrick Page Cortez  
Louisiana Senate President