To: Members of the Maryland General Assembly

From: President Bill Ferguson and Speaker Adrienne A. Jones

Date: September 2, 2020

Re: Phased-in Reopening

As of today, Maryland has a 3.36% positivity rate. We would like to commend the Administration, local governments, health departments and the general public who have taken this pandemic seriously and done the work to flatten the curve.

Following our June 3, 2020 memo to each of you, we are prepared to enter Phase 2 of the reopening policy for the Maryland General Assembly.

Effective September 14, 2020, the House and Senate Office buildings and Department of Legislative Services will be open to legislators and staff only. **We are strongly encouraging all legislators and staff to continue to telework** to the extent possible but understand that some of you may need greater access to your offices.

The House and Senate Office buildings will only be accessible through the garage entrances and main door of the Miller Senate Office Building and Taylor House Office Building, as every legislator and staff member must (1) present a valid, current General Assembly identification card; (2) be temperature checked; (3) wear a mask upon entrance and for the duration of your stay in any public/shared space; and (4) answer questions as to your health status. All other proximity card access to external doors will be cut off for the time being.

Every legislator and staff member will have to show a General Assembly badge to gain entrance to the buildings. No outside visitors will be permitted in the building, including for any meetings or legislative work. This includes those with state identification badges, including State agency or local government representatives.

In joint offices and shared staff working space, please create an A/B schedule so that staff members are not working in shared space at the same time. Volunteer staff, interns and fellows should not be working from Annapolis offices at this time.

In addition, for planning purposes, please know that interns are only permitted to work remotely, and should be limited to a maximum of three per office due to previously outlined budgetary
constraints. While interns can be on-boarded for the 2021 Session, we continue to be in a hiring freeze through the fall, and no paid interns will be allowed until closer to the next Legislative Session.

According to the CDC, the most effective way to combat the COVID-19 virus is frequent hand-washing, social distancing of 6 feet or more, and wearing a mask.

In addition to social distancing, please continue to practice other preventive measures including washing hands frequently with soap and water, using hand sanitizer, avoiding touching face and disinfecting frequently touched work surfaces. The Speaker and President will permit the purchase of a reasonable amount of cleaning and disinfecting products for use in your offices out of your district office budgets.

No one will be permitted to enter the building who has an elevated temperature, shows symptoms or reports symptoms that could be consistent with COVID-19, or refuses to wear a mask. We ask that you use your best judgement before deciding to come to the office, and if you are feeling unwell, to please play it safe.

We will have ongoing checks of offices that choose to open to ensure compliance with the above guidelines.

For planning purposes, we will be notifying the public that the legislature will not host any outside, public events or receptions before or during the 2021 legislative session. This includes District Nights, advocacy events, or providing space to outside organizations for any other purposes. Due to the nature of social distancing, we may need to reserve use of many of these spaces for legislative work. Like all decisions, we will continue to reevaluate this throughout the interim and leading up to Session.

Thank you for your patience as we continue to manage through this unprecedented situation.