STATE OF CONNECTICUT

BY HIS EXCELLENCY

NED LAMONT

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 7E

PROTECTION OF PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND RESPONSE – FURTHER SUSPENSION OR MODIFICATION OF STATUTES

WHEREAS, on March 10, 2020, I issued declarations of public health and civil preparedness emergencies, proclaiming a state of emergency throughout the State of Connecticut as a result of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak in the United States and confirmed spread in Connecticut; and

WHEREAS, my Executive Order No. 7, dated March 12, 2020, among other things, prohibited gatherings of 250 people or more for social and recreational activities, including but not limited to, community, civic, leisure, and sporting events; parades; concerts; festivals; movie screenings; plays or performances; conventions; and similar activities, and suspended various statutes and regulations to protect public health and safety; and

WHEREAS, my Executive Order No.7A, dated March 13, 2020, authorized the Commissioner of Public Health to restrict entrance into nursing homes and similar facilities to protect people who are most vulnerable to COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, my Executive Order No. 7B, dated March 14, 2020, among other things, modified in-person open meetings requirements, waived certain rules to mitigate the critical shortage of hand sanitizer and personal protective equipment (PPE), maintain and increase the availability of childcare, and provide for increased healthcare resources and facilities; and

WHEREAS, my Executive Order 7C, dated March 15, 2020, among other things, cancelled classes in public schools for at least two weeks, provided for closure and remote conduct of business at Department of Motor Vehicle branches, extended deadlines for municipal budget preparations, and suspended or modified laws and regulations governing health care data and visitation at certain health care and congregate care settings; and

WHEREAS, my Executive Order 7D, dated March 16, 2020, restricted social and recreational gatherings of all types to fewer than 50 people, closed bars and restaurants to all service except food and non-alcoholic beverage takeout and delivery, closed gyms, fitness centers and movie theaters, and prohibited on-site operations at off-track betting facilities; and

WHEREAS, COVID-19 is a respiratory disease that spreads easily from person to person and may result in serious illness or death; and

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic; and

WHEREAS, the risk of severe illness and death from COVID-19 appears to be higher for individuals who are 60 years of age or older and for those who have chronic health conditions; and

WHEREAS, to reduce spread of COVID-19, the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Connecticut Department of Public Health recommend implementation of community mitigation strategies to increase containment of the virus and to slow transmission of the virus, including cancellation of gatherings of fifty people or more and social distancing in smaller gatherings; and

WHEREAS, Sections 10-15 and 10-16 of the Connecticut General Statutes require that public schools be in session for at least 180 days during each year and for nine hundred hours of actual schoolwork for full-day kindergarten and grades one to twelve, inclusive, and four hundred and fifty hours for half-day kindergarten; and

WHEREAS, due to these unprecedented circumstances and because of the existence of this public health emergency and the anticipated temporary closure of schools due to COVID-19 risks where such local and regional boards of education deem it necessary to protect the safety and public health, multiple school districts may not be able to fulfill these requirements; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection and State Police are critical to the response to this public health and civil preparedness emergency, and must prioritize personnel and resources to critical public safety needs, as well as limit transmission of COVID-19; and

WHEREAS, to ensure that the pandemic does not cause undue hardship for the state's poorest residents, and to ensure that the Department of Social Services has the necessary flexibility to prioritize work during a period of diminished operational capacity; and

WHEREAS, in-person attendance at a fair hearing held by the Department of Social Services (DSS) is likely to increase the risk of transmission of COVID-19, and DSS must fulfill its statutory responsibilities concerning fair hearings in the event of the closure of buildings or staff reduction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic by holding telephonic hearings;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NED LAMONT, Governor of the State of Connecticut, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the State of Connecticut, do hereby **ORDER AND DIRECT:**

1. **Waiver of 180-Day School Year.** The provisions of Sections 10-15 and 10-16, and any associated regulations, rules, and policies regarding the requirement for 180 days of school per year and certain hours of schoolwork are modified to allow all public schools, upon reopening in the spring 2020, to close school on

their normally scheduled end-dates, so long as local and regional boards of education provide opportunities for continuity of education to all students, to the greatest extent possible, and consistent with federal and state guidance. This order modifies my previous Executive Order No. 7 issued on March 12, 2020, as a result of evolving circumstances, including my Executive Order No. 7C issued March 15, 2020, which cancelled classes in all Connecticut schools from March 17, 2020 until at least March 31, 2020, and the potential impact on schools that may be subject to longer-term cancellations of in-school classes.

2. **Suspension of Required Fingerprinting Availability.** Section 29-17c (a) of the Connecticut General Statutes, which prohibits employees of a municipal police department or the Division of State Police within the Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection from refusing to collect the fingerprints of a person requesting such fingerprinting for the purposes of a criminal history records check, is hereby suspended. The chief of police or Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection or his designee, subject to their discretion, may limit or eliminate fingerprinting hours to limit the transmission of COVID-19 or focus resources on critical public safety needs. The Department of Emergency Services and Public Protection shall continue to perform fingerprinting services for long term care providers pursuant to section 19a-491c of the general statutes at its headquarters in Middletown. Unless modified by further order of the Commissioner or me, State Police barracks will continue to remain open to the general public for other business.

3. **Extension of Time Period for Permits.** Connecticut General Statutes §§ 21-40, 21-47d, 29-28a, 29-147, 29-152h, 29-155b, 29-161m, 29-161q, 29-161z, 29-349, 29-357 are modified to authorize the Commissioner of Emergency Services and Public Protection to extend the expiration date of any permit, license or other credential governed by such sections that expires or expired at any time on or after March 1, 2020, by 90 days, provided that he is authorized to revoke such extensions as he deems necessary in his sole discretion to protect public safety, and to further extend such expiration dates or deadlines for the duration of this public health and civil preparedness emergency, unless extended or terminated by me, and to issue such implementing orders as he deems necessary.

4. **Suspension of the Immediate Recoupment of Public Assistance Benefit Overpayments.** Section 17b-88 and any implementing regulations are modified to authorize the Commissioner of Social Services, to the extent permitted by federal law, to temporarily suspend recoupment of non-fraudulent overpayments for public assistance programs for the duration of this public health and civil preparedness emergency, and issue any implementing orders she deems necessary.

5. **Suspension of In-Person Hearing Attendance at DSS Fair Hearings.** Section 17b-60 of the Connecticut General Statutes is hereby modified to authorize the Commissioner of Social Services to suspend any requirement that an aggrieved person authorized by law to request a fair hearing on a decision of the Commissioner appear in person at such hearing.

Unless specified herein, this order shall take effect immediately and shall remain in effect for the duration of the public health and civil preparedness emergency, unless earlier modified by me.

Dated at Hartford, Connecticut, this 17th day of March, 2020.

Ned Lamont
Governor

By His Excellency's Command

Denise W. Merrill
Secretary of the State