



COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Andy Beshear  
GOVERNOR

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Rep. Walker Thomas  
Co-Chair, Interim Joint Committee on Veterans,  
Military Affairs and Public Protection  
702 Capital Ave  
Annex Room 329C  
Frankfort, KY 40601

Dear Rep. Thomas:

On June 30, 2020, the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Protection, of which you acted as Chair, met and heard testimony regarding COVID-19, especially those relating to Places of Worship. Testifying regarding that topic was Dr. Hershael York, pastor of Buck Run Baptist Church.

During his testimony, Dr. York repeatedly stated that the Governor and his Office had failed to communicate and work with the Kentucky Baptist Convention, which represents nearly 2,400 autonomous Baptist churches in the Commonwealth of Kentucky. This letter shall serve to correct Dr. York's testimony.

When drafting guidelines for in-person church and religious services, the Governor's Office worked closely with Todd Gray, Executive Director of the Kentucky Baptist Convention. They participated in at least one conference call with Governor Beshear, and Mr. Gray provided feedback and suggestions to the draft guidelines. Many of his thoughts were incorporated in the final guidance issued by the Governor's Office.

On Friday, May 8, 2020, Mr. Gray provided the following statement to the Governor's Office endorsing the Healthy at Work guidance for Places of Worship:

"I am thankful for the hard work of Governor Beshear and his team of advisors, as well as their outreach to faith leaders, in working through the details of this plan. While Kentucky Baptists are eager to return to in-person worship they only want to do so in a safe and healthy manner. I believe they will find this plan reasonable, doable, and in the best interests of the health of their congregations."

On behalf of the Governor, I ask that you please include this letter and testimony correction in the record of the June 30, 2020 meeting of the Interim Joint Committee on Veterans, Military Affairs and Public Protection. Should you or committee staffers have any questions, I would be happy to answer them. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rocky Adkins', with a stylized, flowing script.

Rocky Adkins  
Senior Adviser  
Office of the Governor