

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Leader McConnell,

We are grateful for your commitment to create a legal safe harbor for businesses and other entities. Your concern was well stated in the remarks you made on May 7, 2020, that “the litigation epidemic has already begun” and will “impact our ability to get back to work.” This new epidemic may also impact the ability of pastors and faith leaders to worship together and practice faith freely. To that end, we urge you to specifically include liability protections for houses of worship and religious 501(c)(3) organizations as defined in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code in any future COVID-19 liability reform legislation.

Churches and religious groups across the country rushed to serve those most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial outbreak and have faithfully continued to serve those in need. Their tenacity in serving others during this trying time has been nothing short of heroic.

As pastors, priests, rabbis, imams, and other faith leaders begin preparations to re-open meeting places, they face a concerning new threat: a surge of COVID-19-related lawsuits. Compounding this concern, faith leaders face a labyrinth of state and local orders in addition to federal guidance. Welcoming church doors yearning to swing open to help those in need, now risk staying bolted shut due to the impending crush of lawsuits.

We are concerned that without liability protections, houses of worship risk facing lawsuits no matter how many precautions they take. Consider the following example: an individual could single out specific guidelines from across the country to assign liability to a house of worship.

This individual might claim that a church was negligent because it did not follow a single recommendation buried deep within a set of guidelines or because it did not follow a more stringent guideline issued in a town thousands of miles away. The fear that houses of worship could lose First Amendment rights at the behest of lawyers cherry-picking from temporary guidelines is deeply un-American. We have attached a May 8, 2020, letter from nearly 300 faith leaders around the country expressing these concerns.

Thank you for your leadership on liability reform. We ask that you consider including liability protections for houses of worship and religious organizations in any future COVID-19 relief legislation or in standalone liability reforms so our nation’s faith communities can continue to be at the forefront of serving the needs of our great nation.

Sincerely,



Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Mike Johnson
Member of Congress



Robert B. Aderholt
Member of Congress



Rick W. Allen
Member of Congress



Jodey C. Arrington
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Jim Banks
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Ted Budd
Member of Congress



Doug Collins
Member of Congress



Neal Dunn, M.D.
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Bill Flores
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



Michael Guest
Member of Congress



Kevin Hern
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Jody B. Hice
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Steve King
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Doug LaMalfa
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Alex X. Mooney
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Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
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Ralph Norman
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W. Gregory Steube
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Randy Weber
Member of Congress



Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Ron Wright
Member of Congress