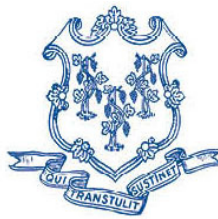


SENATOR GENNARO BIZZARRO
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State of Connecticut
SENATE

SENATE REPUBLICAN WHIP

MEMBER

EDUCATION COMMITTEE
INSURANCE & REAL ESTATE COMMITTEE
JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

March 22, 2020

Paul Mounds, Chief of Staff
Office of the Governor
210 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Commissioner David Lehman
Department of Economic and Community Development
450 Columbus Boulevard; Suite 5
Hartford, CT 06103

Gentlemen:

We write on behalf of the Connecticut real estate Bar with respect to proposed guidelines for the continuation of real estate closings in light of Governor Lamont's "Stay Safe, Stay Home" initiative. Over the past several weeks, we have both been in constant communication with real estate attorneys across Connecticut regarding the proper conduct of real estate closings moving forward. Continuity in the consummation of real estate closings is critically important to preventing a collapse of Connecticut's real estate market and related industries (e.g., construction, lending, storage, professional services), and to maintaining the overall health of our economy at large. We appreciate that legal services are deemed essential under Executive Order 7H, and wish to communicate a few additional thoughts from our conversations over the last few days on behalf of the real estate Bar.

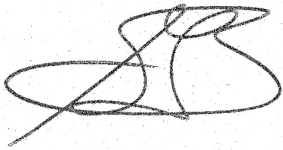
In accordance with Executive Order 7H, real estate closings and in-person meetings at law offices throughout Connecticut should continue, but, for the safety of all involved, it should be clear that everyone adhere to prudent social distancing recommendations, including limiting gatherings to only those persons who are essential to the closing itself (ie, only those who are signatories to the relevant legal documents). Under this scenario, realtors, mortgage professionals, and friends and family should be prohibited from attending closings. Attorneys should limit the flow of traffic in and out of their respective offices by meeting with clients in person by appointment only, and only when telephone or video conferences are not feasible. Law offices should employ DPH-recommended mitigation strategies by reducing staffing levels and implementing employee "work from home" policies as much as possible, and by sanitizing office space and office personnel before and after client meetings.

In our opinion, so long as the above procedures are authorized and followed, no form of remote online notarization is necessary at this time, as attorneys who follow the above guidelines will be able to service the needs of clients while minimizing the risk of contracting or spreading the virus.

Finally, in order to preserve Connecticut's housing market during this crisis, we ask that DECD issue guidance which specifically classifies the services provided by those employed in the real estate trade (i.e., builders, realtors, mortgage professionals, appraisers, home inspectors, etc.) as "essential services" in accordance with Executive Order 7H.

Thank you for your leadership in these difficult times. Please let us know if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the foregoing.

Very Truly Yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'GB' with a large loop at the end.

Gennaro Bizzarro
State Senator, 6th District

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'JED' with a large loop at the end.

Jason E. Doucette
State Representative, 13th District