

## **Declaration of Donovan J. Rodriguez**

I, Donovan J. Rodriguez, declare under penalty of perjury as prescribed in Tex. Civ. Prac. & Rem. Code § 132.001 that the following is true and correct:

1. I currently serve as Chief of Staff to Texas State Representative Ray Lopez (District 125), whose offices are located in the State Capitol complex. I have served in that position for two years, and have been a state employee for a total of seven years. I am also a member of the Texas State Employees Union.

2. My duties include leading a team of full time employees, volunteers, and contractors in a coordinated effort to serve 200,000+ constituents in Texas House District 125. This includes regularly attending neighborhood association meetings, community events, and other public meetings to meet constituents where they're at, gather input from the public, provide resources and give updates on our office efforts; heavy policy research on a wide array of topics and familiarity with state government protocol and procedures; and maintaining relationships with local officials, advocates and stakeholders to support policy research and amplify outreach efforts.

3. I understand that, if Governor Abbott's veto is allowed to stand, I may no longer be paid for my work effective September 1, and that I may need to obtain health insurance via COBRA shortly thereafter. It is unclear whether I will be able to backfill any retirement, life insurance, or medical savings account contributions if my pay is later restored. There is also substantial uncertainty about how legislative staffers will be able to do our jobs, including whether we can keep our badges and

Capitol access and remain connected to Capitol email accounts and servers to ensure a continuation of services to our constituents.

4. I am the sole breadwinner for my family, which includes my wife and one-year-old daughter. Our family has regular doctor visits to monitor my wife's healing due to complications from giving birth. My daughter goes to the doctor regularly for check ups, immunizations, and recently needed an x-ray of her hips. We have access to this care because of the benefits I receive from my state insurance.

5. If my salary and health insurance are disrupted, it will be immensely challenging for my family to make ends meet and will have immediate impact on our housing, among other essentials. The possibility that my salary will be disrupted and the need to make plans for that eventuality is very stressful and contributes to substantial anxiety for my wife and I—especially against the backdrop of raising our first child through the pandemic, the recent winter storm, and other stressors.

6. In preparation for the potential loss of my salary, my wife and I have made a conscious effort to evaluate our finances and see how we can reduce our expenses and live on less. This includes refinancing a vehicle, paying off small debts, eliminating subscriptions and memberships, and looking for alternative housing. We're immediately feeling the effects as my income now is going to payments and savings to try to give us a little breathing room in the near future. We have begun to sell some of our possessions through Facebook Marketplace to save additional money. Finally, we have stocked up on baby supplies and other goods to ensure that we never run out if there's a lapse in income.

7. Because, as I understand it, I am not being terminated, it is unclear whether I will be able to obtain unemployment assistance. To make ends meet my wife and I would also consider payday loans, credit cards, and other potential options to pay for essentials and that unfortunately creates a long term issue relating to our credit. To the extent any student loan payments come due, we would also consider delaying those payments to the extent possible. My wife and I may need to devote additional resources and attention to our passion projects including her recently published children's book and I'd immediately be looking for additional income.

8. My grandmother was a longtime civil servant, a retired state employee, who taught me about the value of public service. She also taught me that getting a good government job would provide career stability and the ability to provide for my family. I strongly want to continue my employment in the legislature, but I am distressed, to say the least, that Governor Abbott's veto has made it harder for legislative staffers to do our jobs and to make ends meet.

9. I've worked for the Texas Legislature for the last seven years, and would experience great difficulty in starting over with a new career path. But because the Governor's veto affects the entire Legislature, positions with other members and some state offices are unavailable. If my salary is suspended for a substantial period of time, I would therefore need to think about other potential employment options, as would many of my colleagues. To leave the Legislature at such a pivotal moment, and to fall back down the career ladder and into a new career, would be both personally heartbreaking and financially difficult for my family.

My name is Donovan J. Rodriguez, my date of birth is December 25, 1991, and my work address is located in the State Capitol complex. I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed in Bexar County, Texas on July 7, 2021.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Donovan J. Rodriguez".

---

Donovon J. Rodriguez