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July 13, 2020

Hon. Mike Cooper Parish President, St. Tammany, LA
21490 Koop Drive
Mandeville, Louisiana 70471

Dear Mike,

I listened with great disappointment to your announcement that you will follow Governor Edwards' lead and issue a mandatory face-mask requirement for all public spaces in the Parish. In your Executive Order you cite the Louisiana Homeland Security and Emergency Assistance and Disaster Act, La. Rev. Stat. 29:.721 also cited by Governor Edwards. Parroting the Governor, your order cites the following:

“WHEREAS, since moving into Phase II, the Parish has experienced an alarming spike in new **COVID-19 cases** and **COVID-related** hospitalizations; and

WHEREAS, information and data from medical professionals indicate that COVID-19 is more likely to be spread from individual to individual through close contact indoors and particularly through gatherings when people do not practice social distancing or wear masks or face coverings; and

WHEREAS, **the spread of COVID-19 between individuals is greatly reduced through the wearing of masks or face coverings while indoors;**” [emphasis mine-MC]

In your press conference announcing the foregoing, as reported by WDSU Ch 6 News¹.

“St. Tammany Parish President Mike Cooper announced Saturday that based upon recommendations from St. Tammany Parish Coroner Dr. Charles Preston, as well as additional advisement from **local physicians and healthcare professionals**[.]”

As a St Tammany citizen, property tax payer, retail shopper and business owner and as someone who voted for you I respectfully reject your claims made above and ask that you further declare the specific facts and peer-reviewed data that support your attempt to suffocate my right to free association and autonomy in medical care choices in this

¹ <https://www.wdsu.com/article/st-tammany-parish-president-going-ahead-with-mask-mandate-on-heels-of-gov-edwards-announcement/33284578>

misguided, Sisyphean effort to “slow the spread” of Covid-19. Please inform the citizenry the names and medical expertise of those “physicians and healthcare professionals” that have provided medical counsel that supports the draconian regulation on face-masks you issued today and the sources they relied upon to make such recommendations so that the public might consider their veracity.

In the mean time, I offer up a counter, medical narrative of peer-reviewed science and medical research on the matter of masks, “cases” and overall mortality from the virus.

1. There is simply no, peer-reviewed, control group study, ever conducted, that yields the results you, Governor Edwards and nearly every other elected official state: that asymptomatic people, protect others from influenza infections by transmission through the wearing of face masks. Yet there is plenty of this type of research available that prove the opposite e.g. William Kellogg, 2011².

“Studies of performance in real-world settings

Before recommending them, it's important to understand how masks and respirators perform in households, healthcare, and other settings.

Cloth masks as source control

A historical overview of cloth masks notes their use in US healthcare settings starting in the late 1800s, first as source control on patients and nurses and later as PPE by nurses.³

Kellogg⁴ seeking a reason for the failure of cloth masks required for the public in stopping the 1918 influenza pandemic, found that the number of cloth layers needed to achieve acceptable efficiency made them difficult to breathe through and caused leakage around the mask. We found no well-designed studies of cloth masks as source control in household or healthcare settings.

In sum, given the paucity of information about their performance as source control in real-world settings, along with the extremely low efficiency of cloth masks as filters and their poor fit, **there is no evidence to support their use by the public or healthcare workers to control the emission of particles from the wearer.**”
[emphasis mine-MC]

The above is cited in a research paper⁵, *Masks-For-All For Covid-19 Not Based On Sound Data*, authored by Dr. Lisa Brosseau a national expert on respiratory protection and infectious

² <https://ajph.aphapublications.org/doi/10.2105/AJPH.10.1.34>

³ <https://www.ijic.info/article/view/11366>

⁴ ibid AJPH

⁵ <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/04/commentary-masks-all-covid-19-not-based-sound-data>

diseases and professor (retired), University of Illinois at Chicago. Dr. Margaret Sietsema is also an expert on respiratory protection and an assistant professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago.

While it is true that the personal opinions of thousands of doctors support masking they are not based on peer reviewed research or any real-world testing (as stated above and in at least 26 other studies on masking, reviewed at The Swiss Policy Research Center⁶). This is further compounded by the plain evidence that there is not a single geographic area or state, including this state and parish, under months long mask ordinances, that is not seeing a “spike in cases”; to commit St Tammany citizens to this course of action when there is simply no prospect of success is to hold out the very real possibility of having to permanently extend the action.

You also state that St Tammany has “an alarming spike in cases” but this is simply not borne out by your own data. Out of 49,000 commercial tests and a little less than 1,000 conducted by the state we have a total 3,257 “cases” (a dubious number that includes multiple positives for the same individual), that’s a whopping 0.06514 “positive” results!; and the total mortality rate from those “positives” is 187 deaths or 0.00374! this equals a mortality rate for the entire parish population (255,000, 2019 U.S. Census) from Covid-19 at 0.00073098! For these astronomical mortality rates you want to order an entire parish into another “state of emergency”, closing nearly all-dine establishments and virtually guaranteeing that more service industry jobs and life-long vocations will be crushed. Is this prudent policy?!

The above does not even begin to unpack the much needed public debate over your and the governor’s policies that have demonstrably delayed the inevitable “herd-immunity”⁷ that MUST occur and public discussions on prudent recommendations to improve our immune systems before next flu season, something lockdowns and “social distancing” are repugnant to.

Finally, as I am sure you are aware, last Friday (10, July) Louisiana District Judge Craig Marcotte has issued a temporary restraining order⁸ against Shreveport mayor Adrian Perkins’ mandatory mask order he also issued by Executive Order using Governor Edwards’ cut and paste template. There will be a hearing on July 20th to determine if the judge’s order is to be made into a preliminary injunction. That case was filed by local businessmen and a pair of concerned citizens.

I believe it is prudent for citizens of this parish and the rest of this state to consider similar actions to put an end to these government power grabs and usurpations of basic freedoms

⁶ <https://swprs.org/a-swiss-doctor-on-covid-19/#latest>

⁷ <https://theconversation.com/coronavirus-could-it-be-burning-out-after-20-of-a-population-is-infected-141584>

⁸ <https://www.shreveporttimes.com/story/news/local/2020/07/10/temporary-restraining-order-shreveport-mayor-perkins-mask-order-covid-19/5414985002/>

and liberties, based upon rickety “science” at best and outright data manipulation and fraud at the worst.

Mike, I placed my trust in you with my votes, last November and December and pray that you consider the rapidly collapsing Covid-19 “pandemic” narrative. St. Tammany can, like South Dakota under Governor Christy Noeme, lead the way out of this crisis; every day you delay that is a day the “new normal” negatively impacts your current and future citizens.

God bless

Mike Church