

December 8, 2021

Dear Commissioner Coates,

I am opposed to the adoption of Resolution 2021-21 as a Health Ordinance in Charles County. I am distressed to see the continued use of County resources for the purpose of mandating mask use for private citizens. St. Mary's, Calvert and King George counties do not have mask mandates and there has been no significant difference in the COVID infection numbers in those regions compared to ours. Mask wearing continues by many people regardless of a mandate. Those who wish to wear them will and those who do not want to wear them should not be forced. Much data exists which disproves the efficacy of masks. As a matter of fact, September 2021 was the fourth deadliest month for our jurisdiction, with masks in place. So it is arguable whether masks really work or not. I'm convinced that people shopping in stores or eating in restaurants are not the main causes of virus spread. Most people are polite, keeping their distance from others and the store employees are usually behind plexiglass.

While we may disagree on whether masks work at stopping the transmission of respiratory viruses, we can agree that there are better and more effective ways to save lives in Charles County. Wouldn't focus on early treatment be a much better use of the Commissioners' time and resources? Making the availability of monoclonal antibodies, advising physicians of which steroid treatments help relieve stressed airways or even allowing physicians to prescribe off-label treatments under the principle of "Right to Try" would all be ways to respect the dignity of the people in our community and show the true good-faith efforts to shield the vulnerable from adverse outcomes of the disease.

We have had almost 2 years of restrictions, mask mandates and general misery. The sense of the community is lost. The trust in public health officials and our elected representatives is severely damaged. Implementing a mask mandate, passed with force or law, right before Christmas seems punitive, especially after just lifting it. Why was it lifted by the way? Low infection numbers? Nothing has changed. Why would it be necessary to reinstitute it? Why, when questions are asked, no answers are given? Why are there no metrics in place so that progress can be monitored? Why is there no plan so the end can be in sight? Preserving our freedom is your role as a representative. Not freedom for the sake of doing whatever one wants to, but for the sake of informed decision making that relates to what is best for each individual and their family. Even if the majority of constituents were in favor of mask-wearing, the rights of the minority should be protected.

Personally, I have a legitimate health issue which makes it difficult to breathe. Even when a "medical exemption" is allowed within the mandate, this is not practical. I have experienced embarrassment and humiliation when employees question, sometimes yelling across the store, to inform me of the need to wear a mask, which I then have to answer. I have even called in advance to speak with someone to try to avoid this difficulty, was assured everything was fine, to no avail. I should not have to share personal health information with anyone, but the mask mandate makes this a reality in my life. This has made me distraught at times, hanging onto the hope that the mandate will soon end.

Making recommendations to wear masks is good, forcing people to wear them is not. Each family dynamic is different and sometimes complex, hence the reason they should be the ones to make the choice. The science does not support mask-wearing, the people are tired of the masquerade and it continues to hurt all of us. Pretending that masks work, puts people at more risk because they believe they are being protected, when that is not the case; available information has proven otherwise.

This virus is endemic and we should not have to live our lives according to its statistics. The health department should make recommendations, but not mandate action.

Sincerely,



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