

19 April 2020

Dear Assembly Members:

After reading the borough assembly's proposal for further restricting life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness amidst the corona virus pandemic, my stomach churned once again. I urge the Assembly to vote a resounding NO on the proposal to require masking as an egregious overreach of power to the residents of our community. If allowed to become rule of law, the governing body of this fine city is only opening a "Pandora's box" of further abuse of power.

First off, let me address briefly the issue of the efficacy of a generalized masking:

Directly from the State of Alaska Health Alert #010, it states: "There is limited evidence available on how well cloth face coverings help reduce COVID-19 transmission. Their primary role is to reduce the release of respiratory droplets into the air when someone speaks, coughs, or sneezes, including people who have COVID-19 but have no symptoms." (Emphasis noted is my own.)

In an alert March 30, 2020, the CDC said that healthy people do not need to wear face masks unless they are caring for someone who is ill with the new coronavirus. They changed their guidelines April 3, 2020 to include the following: "CDC recommends wearing cloth face coverings in public settings where other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain (e.g., grocery stores and pharmacies) especially in areas of significant community-based transmission." Petersburg is not an area of significant community-based transmission.

Consider the following:

True: information about this virus is changing; as are the statistics that WHO, CDC, governments of countries, media, politicians, pundits and others use to push their agendas – and they ALL have them. Death rates are stacked, models are created as valid trajectories then proven false by reality time after time. It is easy to get caught in the mis-information trap.

True: We, the world community, the United States of America, Alaska, and the community of Petersburg have never faced something of this magnitude before and there are countless unknowns and variables. Many people have been, are, and will be affected – some will lose their lives because of this and many, many more will lose their jobs – in large part because of the pandemic of FEAR, the magic bullet of all power grabbers. (Every tyrannical dictator of the 20th century has used this to gain control. "Outlandish!" you protest, "this is Petersburg!" Not so, my friends! Consider Florida where it is now illegal due to the virus to *sit* on one of its beaches. Or Michigan, where it is illegal to use motorized water craft on that state's particular waterways, or New York City where people are encouraged *by their government* to snap photos of their neighbors who violate the stay at home mandate, and then send those photos to their loyal mayor who will then send in enforcers to arrest violators!)

True: Every single life is precious. It is a serious and sacred obligation to help our fellowmen. However, when personal liberty is grossly impeded or affronted by demands of any government

entity (such as mandating the wearing of *any* article, regardless of the reason), the equation has become fundamentally flawed as it swallows up both rights and responsibilities of the individual in its usurpation of power.

Also true: For those considered at high risk of infection, they, too, have obligations. They, their caregivers, and family members who live with them can also take precautions *as they deem necessary* in light of the inherent risks of this pandemic.

In summary, let each individual in the borough, city and boundaries of this community of Petersburg be encouraged to exercise his or her best judgment and common sense: in pursuit of his or her life, liberty and pursuit of happiness even in the time of a world-wide pandemic - without judgment or condemnation - in the use or non-use of a face mask. Or are we also going to encourage snitches taking photos of the noncompliant and reporting them to authorities?

Respectfully,
Donna Marsh

Sources:

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