

## Debra Thompson

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**From:** rickgbraun@gmail.com  
**Sent:** Sunday, November 15, 2020 4:16 PM  
**To:** Assembly  
**Subject:** Masking Mandate

Greetings,

During this time of Covid, I strongly believe that everyone should wear a mask when around people outside your immediate family and in enclosed spaces.

We all understand that lockdowns, stay at home orders and closing schools are very destructive to the economy and peoples lives. No one wants that to happen. We also know that if people don't feel safe, they won't get out and shop and go to restaurants and keep the economy going. I believe we should not just try to help people feel safe, but actually help them be safe. There are ways to do this and not shut down the economy.

Numerous studies described on the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website examined high exposure events where symptomatically ill people interacted with many other people. The universal wearing of masks resulted in at least a 70% reduction in the transmission of the virus.

A recent economic analysis using US data and cited by the CDC, found that increasing universal masking by 15% could prevent the need for lockdowns and reduce associated losses of up to \$1 trillion or about 5% of gross domestic product. Any increase in the level of universal masking will reduce the spread of the virus and improve the economy.

We are all watching the recent surge in Covid cases around the world. For a number reasons, Petersburg for the time being, is not suffering the same fate:

1. We live on an island where the number of infected visitors is severely limited.
2. Most visitors are being tested and are quarantining for a time before mingling with the residents.
3. We have an excellent group of people doing testing and contact tracing.
4. The school administration and staff are employing all the best practices methods to control transmission of the virus among teachers and students.
5. Enough people throughout the community are being serious about masking, hand washing, maintaining safe social distances and avoiding crowded areas.

With all this in mind, my recommendation to the Petersburg Assembly is to request as strongly as possible that everyone wear a mask. This should be done with large posters, public service announcements and other constant reminders. I think more harm than good can come from forcing people to wear masks when there are no known cases in town.

Mandating universal masking may become a necessary step. When and if that time comes, a masking mandate will make sense to most people and is more likely to be followed.

Thanks for listening  
Rick Braun