

April 28, 2020

Office of the Governor
James R. Thompson Center
100 W. Randolph, 16-100
Chicago, IL 60601

The Honorable Governor JB Pritzker:

With respect to the Governor’s newest executive order to take effect on May 1, 2020, we feel Governor JB Pritzker has not given due consideration of the epicenter of this problem for the state of Illinois as evidenced by his disrespectful response when asked directly about opening up downstate.

The overwhelming facts according to the State’s own numbers\* shows the epicenter of the COVID problem for Illinois centers in and around Chicago’s dense population. It is not until you look at St. Clair County, the eighth-most populous county in Illinois and the most populous in the southern portion of the state that a steep increase is recorded. Without discounting the seriousness of COVID-19, the fact is that Illinois south of I-80 has taken the Governor’s recommendation seriously and has been able to largely mitigate the COVID threat.

In downstate’s Dewitt County, the one reported case of COVID-19 according to local news is inaccurately reported by the State due to the patient’s origin of residence.\*\* The individual was tested through a lab affiliated with the University of Missouri, where he currently resides. The individual will now be counted as a Missouri case, as he tested positive in Missouri, where he currently resides; not in Illinois.

Furthermore, by making certain protective actions required, we feel the citizen’s constitutional rights are in jeopardy especially if it is expected police enforcement will be used to ensure compliance. One such example is the Governor’s order requiring face covering. This is in conflict with the State and Federal law requiring a person in possession of a CCW specifically not to hide their identity with a face covering. Enforcement of the Governor’s executive order *s*trips a gun owner of his rights while complying with the Executive Order to wear a mask, ormakes them a criminal if they exercise their gun rights while complying with the Executive Order to wear a mask.\*\*\*

Specifically, the largest shortfall of the May 1, 2020 executive order is the continued restriction on businesses and personal income that ultimately provide the funding necessary to maintain quality of life in Farmer City. Small businesses are in danger of closing after enduring one month of closure. We have lost at least one business already. Additional months imposed by Governor Pritzker will ensure the demise of the least solvent; ultimately costing our community jobs. We have invested heavily in restoring our downtown.

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The executive order is also negatively impacting one of our biggest resources in our small town.  We should be having Friday night races at our local racetrack right now. Since we cannot, our race track, gas stations, and restaurants are hurting.  In turn, we are losing the tax revenue that we get from these businesses.  Revenues are expected to decline by more than 40% over the next quarter. As a small town, we heavily rely on that revenue to keep our town running and are worried about the long-lasting negative impact this will have on our restaurants and bars that were struggling before this order was given.

Our small-town life that we enjoy has been halted.  Our parks are closed, as well as our churches and sports.  This stay-at-home order is ruining our sense of community.  Our kids are tired of being cooped up.  Our city pool was in the middle of a big makeover when all of this started and since then, construction has been halted.  Our families will not have a pool to enjoy this summer, even when this is all over.

The City of Farmer City will encourage our residents to continue practicing social distancing and wearing of masks as they are comfortable doing so, and to continue self-quarantine for as long as practical or when needed. But, additional months of closures will only cause the demise of small towns that ultimately support up-state Illinois. We will not enforce compliance to the demise of our businesses.

It is time for the leadership of Illinois to recognize the differences between metro up-state and rural down-state. You are governing two different cultures.

Sincerely,

City Council of Farmer City

Mayor Scott Testory Councilman Willard McKinley

Councilman Scott Kelley Councilman Shelley Friedrich

Councilman Ben Burden

 \*https://coronavirus.illinois.gov/s/county-map

\*\*https://foxillinois.com/news/coronavirus/first-case-of-covid-19-in-dewitt-county?fbclid=IwAR0Il8dEV-g7bhZXSoKDjUgjxyJJZWvmFWEshgthcDZHOfExnT56\_FMFr1I

\*\*\* https://edgarcountywatchdogs.com/2020/04/gov-pritzkers-executive-order-makes-criminals-of-unsuspecting-gun-owners/?fbclid=IwAR3Oh\_T9CZ5r8YeC3T7n0OOxh7R\_VmzfnwRLK-p6TzL-tNboRgvusx4NaC4