

November 6, 2020

To the Members of the Montgomery County Council,

I submit this letter in response to the Executive Order No. 122-20 calling for further restrictions on businesses. I am a resident of Montgomery County and am a lawyer in DC. I grew recently bought a house near downtown Silver Spring in May. For the following reasons, I am not in favor of these restrictions.

First, businesses are struggling. The current restrictions greatly inhibit their ability to operate and make a profit. For example, my sister is a hair stylist at a high-end salon in Takoma Park. Since re-opening in June, she has seen at least a *\$500 per week* decline in her income. Any further restrictions will simply force the salon to close. (I understand the current proposal will not impact salons, but her experience applies to those businesses affected by this order.) Furthermore, the current protections work. She had a client test positive for Covid-19 after visiting the salon. However, because of the precautions, primarily masks, neither my sister nor anyone at the salon contracted the virus.

Second, there's very little evidence the additional restrictions on retail, gyms, and child care centers are effective. The current studies on childcare centers indicate a child care center does not act as a vector for transmission. The rates simply reflect the rate in the community or are lower. Parents are struggling and need access to childcare, and these centers need to remain profitable or they will close permanently. Similarly, for retail and gyms, the additional restrictions simply hurt businesses and will not impact the spread of the virus. There were initial reports of spread happening in packed fitness studios. However, a packed fitness studio is not the current reality. I started attending PureBarre in June, when it reopened. Class sizes are limited to 6 people, and in reality, the same 15-20 people take class on a rotating basis. We wear masks and are temperature checked. There have no reported cases at PureBarre in 5 months.

I understand the dangers associated with the virus, and I acknowledge its impact on our community. However, wearing a mask, testing, contact tracing, and quarantining those exposed to the virus are the most effective ways to fight it. Imposing these proposed restrictions will not act to reduce the spread because they do not target the problem. People are predominantly contracting the virus from attending **mask-less** parties, *i.e.* birthday parties, weddings, and family gatherings. Restrictions should either prevent people from entering an area with the virus, *i.e.* by an enforced quarantine, or prevent people from spreading the virus to others, *i.e.* by wearing a mask. As long as people can enter a space and conduct business while wearing a mask and without needing to remove it, including gyms, retail stores, and houses of worship, there is no reason to further reduce capacity in those spaces. Any new restrictions, if any, should solely focus on situations where people cannot wear a mask. I appreciate your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katelyn Davis