

12/11/20

Dear Council....

I'm writing to ask you to re-consider portions of Executive Order 139-20 specifically related to recreation facilities of ice skating rinks. While overall I am highly in favor of common sense restrictions to help our community and country cope with this terrible pandemic, I feel the county executive has over reached related to children in ice skating rinks. The order will effectively close the rinks in Montgomery County down. My family, including my teenage children, have had significant mental stress to deal with like so many others during this pandemic. The one saving grace for our family and so many others like us has been our ability to safely participate in ice hockey in Montgomery county. The rinks are safe. The protocols put in place at the rinks are strict and have worked.

There is no evidence in the community of transmission at the ice skating rinks. While some kids who participate in ice hockey in Montgomery county have been infected by covid, it does not appear to have spread or even to have been picked up at the ice skating rinks. The rinks and clubs have put in place strict protocols to shut down any team that has a positive case for 14 days. Period. Game protocols are strict too, allowing only a handful of parents in the building and requiring social distancing on the bench. And mask wearing is required throughout, both on and off the ice! The only "evidence" against the facts related to hockey and covid transmission, was an article written last week in the Washington Post. But that article focused on events from the summer in New England, where locker rooms were used and no masks were required at that time. In Montgomery County, locker rooms have been closed and mask wearing is mandatory. This is working so please do not shut us down at this critical time!

Frederick County just today announced new restrictions, but they seem to be using a more common sense approach for ice rinks and allowing up to 50 people in the ice skating rink. As you know, an ice skating rink is a very large surface with high ceilings and large industrial grade hvac systems. These rinks can safely accommodate enough people, kids mainly, to play a simple game. Unlike other sports such as basketball or football, the kids spend mere seconds near others during the course of a game as they chase a fast moving puck. It is largely a socially distanced game.

Please revise the executive order to allow ice hockey to continue in a safe manner.

Thank you for your consideration.

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