

The mask mandate is affecting businesses in Montgomery County. Members of the community have said throughout the mask mandate that they take their business to Fredrick and Howard counties because they do not have a mask mandate. Why would the council take away business from hard working Montgomery County residents? Our businesses are closing because of this!

The gym industry is suffering the most in this county when mask mandates are in place. I work at Onelife Fitness in Olney. Our company has clubs in Fredrick County, DC, Virginia, Georgia, and other places in the Midwest. Our clubs without mask mandates do not have COVID outbreaks. COVID is not spreading inside gyms without masks on. Our memberships are low in all clubs that have had mask mandates and members freeze their memberships when the mask mandate is in place because many people do not want to workout in a mask. Exercise is one of the biggest components from protecting ourselves from getting COVID. We need to keep members of Montgomery County health to prevent poor health outcomes, and we cannot do that effectively with the mask mandate in place. WE are also in a mental health crisis, which is only worse with your mask mandates. Citizens of Montgomery County need the gym to help with their mental health. Exercise is not just good for the body, but it is good for the mind, and citizens of Montgomery County are ignoring their physical and mental health needs because they will not workout in masks.

We have a hospital grade air filtration system in all of our clubs that kills about 95% of germs and bacteria in the air and on surfaces. We have strict cleaning protocols in place, and I would much rather space out members 6 feet apart so they can work out without a mask on then implement another mask mandate that will hurt our business. Many other states have had mandates inside gyms to where members had to wear masks except for while actively engaging in exercise. COVID did not spread in those gyms, it will not in ours!

Why is the county looking at number of cases to be the deciding factor of a mask mandate? We are the most vaccinated county in the State of Maryland. Is that why we are vaccinated? To not get sick enough to crowd our hospitals and die from COVID? Aren't we vaccinated so we don't need a mask mandate? What is the point of vaccinations if we can't take off our masks? We can't continue living in fear when we have taken ALL precautions to get back to normal? The numbers the council needs to look at are hospital and death rates. The point of a lockdown, the point of social distancing, the point of masks was to not over crowd our hospitals. If our hospitals are no longer at capacity with COVID patients, why do we need a mask mandate? You are looking at the wrong numbers.

The mask mandate does nothing to help protect us. We are going to Howard County go shopping, to go to the movies, to go out to restaurants. We aren't wearing masks when we take our business out of the county. We to go parties at friend's homes without masks. Implementing the mask mandate will do nothing but turn the citizens of Montgomery County away from supporting and staying local.

Instead of a mask mandate, implement the policies that New York follows. Make it mandatory for Citizens to show proof of vaccination to continue to not wear masks. COVID isn't going anywhere, and we are vaccinated so we can continue to live if we do get it. Positive cases do not equal death. THIS IS WHY WE ARE VACCINATED.

Our county council is turning into dictatorship. The people are done with masks. WE have done our part, now it is time to listen to the people who voted you into office and not enforce a mask mandate. Your mask mandates are closing businesses and turning Montgomery County citizens to take the

business to other counties. I am a Democrat and will not vote any single member of this council back into office.