

Dear Council Member,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to this issue. I have been a resident of Montgomery County for over 30 years, and am 61 years of age, I have a doctorate in biology. I know 10 people who have gotten COVID-19 infections; two died and one has long-term (and possibly permanent) memory loss from a COVID-induced stroke and cannot work. Of the others, most were very sick for a long time, in some cases requiring going to the hospital, and only one had minor symptoms. I appreciate that Montgomery County under your leadership has resisted pressure from the governor and businesses to open up the county more than you have given the level of COVID in our area.

This is not the time to do so; frankly, the opposite would be prudent. The mask and six-foot criteria established for social contact was based on initial assumptions about how COVID is spread. As we now know that COVID spreads by aerosols, we know that COVID transmits further than six feet when masks are worn, and much further when they are not. When people are drinking, they are not wearing masks, There is also reporting that a new strain has evolved that is even more contagious despite mask-wearing and social distancing. Countries that have gotten on top of this pandemic observed much more strict requirements until the numbers dwindled to near zero deaths and few cases, like where my niece lives in Western Australia. We are far from that. I urge you to consider current COVID information and the fact that we are entering flu season, which will further strain our medical resources and likely will overlap with a new COVID spike. Based on the facts (still high numbers here, aerosol transmission, reported greater contagiousness of a new strain, and flu season looming), I vehemently oppose loosening any restrictions, and implore you to not only deny further opening through this Executive Order, but to impose more restrictions. I suggest going back to phase one so that we have some hope of getting to the other side of this, like most of the other first world nations that are getting this under control have done.

I also ask that you require masks to be worn when people are walking, running, or riding bikes in communities, as is required in Colorado and many other areas. I live in a busy neighborhood with a walking path nearby, so the sidewalk in front of my house often has people on it, and fewer than 5% wear masks. It is difficult for me to get to my car parked on the street or take out the garbage, let alone go for a walk, without crossing paths with people. I ask that you require those on sidewalks and walking, running, and riding paths to wear masks.

Thank you for your considerations.

Sincerely,

Dr, Jennifer Hill  
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