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Subject: Public Comment for May 11 Board of Commissioners Executive Session

Jay Johnson, Empire Township:

Good morning. I note for the record that this meeting is the 9th consecutive meeting of the Leelanau County Board of Commissioners at which the Board Chair has refused to follow the professional medical advice of the Benzie-Leelanau Board of Health regarding the wearing of masks indoors. Mr. Bunek, do you think your skepticism about the need for masks and vaccinations have made our County safer? I do not think so, but that is not the issue I want to focus on today.

I am sure some of you read my recent letter to the editor of the *Leelanau Enterprise* in which I criticized Mr. Bunek for wasting Commissioners' time addressing inherently divisive issues that have absolutely nothing to do with County business. Unfortunately, Mr. Bunek continues to unnecessarily push his personal Christian religious beliefs while ignoring the religious beliefs, or non-beliefs, of others whom he purports to serve.

Today, Mr. Bunek has put before the Board yet another draft of his resolution to open Commission meetings with prayer. Yet, rather than unite us, he continues to divide us by promoting only Christian prayer. He does this indirectly, but quite purposefully, because his resolution allows only clergy from Leelanau County's churches to give the opening prayer. Does Mr. Bunek not know that the nearest Jewish synagogue is close by in Traverse City, that the nearest Islamic Mosque is in Big Rapids, and that the nearest African Methodist Episcopal Church is in Saginaw? Does Mr. Bunek not know that there are atheists and agnostics living in Leelanau County? If he is aware of those facts, one can only conclude that he does not care that he is offending some of his own constituents. That is not leadership; it is cowardice.

Thank you for listening to my comments.