

Laurel Evans

Subject: FW: Bunek's resolution

From: Scott Lowe <slowe108@gmail.com>
Date: February 8, 2021 at 11:13:19 AM EST
To: Patricia Soutas-Little <psoutaslittle@leelanau.gov>
Subject: Bunek's resolution

Dear Commissioner Soutas-Little,

Here's the text of a letter I sent to Commissioner Bunek. I'm sending it to you, because I'm in your district and you might want to know what Mr. Bunek is hearing.

Scott Lowe

Dear Mr. Bunek,

I am puzzled by your resolution endorsing the widely criticized Great Barrington Declaration as a blueprint for the County's response to the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Great Barrington Declaration urges the opening of schools, which we have already done, and the protection of vulnerable populations, which we currently do with masking and social distancing. Vulnerable populations are generally defined to include all those over the age of 65, among many other groups. I have been told that your goal is to drop these protections for seniors, which would go directly counter to the Great Barrington Declaration. I hope that is not true.

While it is disturbing that County Commissioners think they have the epidemiological knowledge and governmental mandate to override county, state and federal public health experts on matters of life and death, others have addressed these issues quite clearly. My concern here is for the economic survival of the County's many small businesses.

A significant percentage of the disposable income in Leelanau is held by those 65 and older. Many, if not most, of the tourists traditionally coming to Leland, Northport, Lake Leelanau, Suttons Bay, Glen Arbor, Empire, and the other commercial centers of the County are also seniors. "Opening" the County further than local, state and federal experts recommend would obviously threaten the health of the people with the most money to spend.

If, for example, the County were to remove mask requirements, a large percentage of affluent local residents would almost certainly drive a few extra miles to Grand Traverse County to spend their money in relative safety. I know I'd readily drive to Tom's on 72 or Maxbauer Ace Hardware on West Front before I'd risk Covid-19 by running in to Bunting's or Bunek's. County restaurants would also lose affluent customers. Many tourists might not come to the County at all, for fear of running into unmasked Covid carriers.

Your resolution, if adopted, would presumably be nothing more than a divisive ideological gesture— basically meaningless. That’s the best-case scenario. If acted upon, it would lead to measurable negative economic impacts on our local shops and restaurants at a time when they most need support.

In conclusion, I am baffled by the purpose of your proposed resolution. Unless your goal is to harm the County’s small business owners, you should withdraw it.

Sincerely,

Scott Lowe
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