

Chris Taggart

From: craig <craig.climber@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, October 28, 2020 1:57 PM
To: Ravalli County Commissioners Office
Subject: [EXTERNAL] COVID-19

Dear Commissioners, I wanted to comment on your recent meeting discussing COVID-19. In your draft statement, you say "respect each other's right to make decisions about their own health." Wearing a mask in public is not just about a person's decision about their own health. It is a decision about everyone's health. It is a decision about the economic health of the community. We have laws and rules to protect everyone's health, happiness, and well being. For example, why do we have speed limits? One person may feel perfectly safe driving 80 mph down Eastside highway, but for the safety of everyone we have a 60 mph speed limit there. As commissioners you are leaders in this community and sometimes being a leader requires tough decisions. The best way right now to slow the spread off COVID is for everyone to wear masks, social distance, wash hands, and avoid large gatherings. These are very small things to ask. In our polarized community/nation, there is a lot of misinformation being spread as rapidly as the virus. As community leaders I urge you to listen to the scientists and medical professionals who are working day in, day out to combat this disease. The best thing for this community would be a mask mandate. If effective, it would relieve the stress in the hospital and help the economy.

Over the last month my wife and I visited Washington State, Utah, and stopped in Idaho. In Washington and one town in Utah, where masks are required, I felt relatively safe going out to eat a couple of times and going into shops. When we stopped in Idaho, hardly anyone was wearing a mask. Needless to say, we didn't stay long and didn't return. This is how I feel in Ravalli county, when I go into a place in Ravalli county and see most people inside not wearing a mask or socially distanced, I leave immediately. Prior to COVID, I would go out to eat once or twice a week. Now, never, not in Ravalli county. I pretty much go to the grocery store and only essential outings. It is very sad. I have many friends who feel the same, they just aren't as vocal as others.

Finally, I think that it would really help our local businesses to get the support of the commissioners in their efforts to follow CDC guidelines and slow the spread of COVID. If there was an enforced mandate for masks and social distancing, they would not have to worry about people coming in their stores complaining/yelling about wearing masks. In the couple of towns I recently visited out of state with manadates, everyone seems very sensible and respectful.

Thanks for your time, Craig

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