



# The Phyllis Schlafly Report

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## Whatever Happened to Social Distancing?

For many weeks, law-abiding Americans submitted to the demands of so-called experts to maintain a 6-foot distance from our friends, relatives, and fellow human beings. That meant familiar gathering places such as restaurants, bars, hotels, and sports arenas had to close and remain closed indefinitely, causing economic hardship to millions.

When a few hundred law-abiding citizens, some lawfully carrying their personal weapons, marched in front of the Michigan state capitol to protest the nation's most extreme stay-at-home order, liberals feigned outrage.

The "mask police" demanded that all Americans don intrusive face-coverings in public, supposedly to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The House of Representatives has switched to proxy voting despite its unconstitutionality, and Republicans have sued to stop this erosion of safeguards against improper procedures in Congress.

With citizens who respect the law stuck at home under lockdown orders by Democratic governors, the lawless seized the streets. Mobs of thousands of militants, many armed with crowbars, fire starters and other dangerous weapons, rampaged the darkened streets in search of soft targets to loot, burn and pillage in a senseless orgy of destruction.

The violent chaos is the tragedy that results from the absence of an armed citizenry, by which merchants defend their shops with their own lawful firearms. When a black professional basketball player saw his truck being vandalized by a protester in his residential neighborhood, the 6-foot, 6-inch, 225-pound athlete rushed out and beat up the vandal.

But we are not all as strong as giants who play in the NBA, and many of us rely on local police, sheriffs and mayors to protect our private property against lawlessness. The state governor, state police, and the national guard are there to be called in as needed to restore order.

Yet in city after city, all led by weak Democratic mayors, the police stood by while the life savings (and

in some cases, the lives) of ordinary citizens went up in smoke. A police station was burned to the ground in Minneapolis and a federal law enforcement officer was shot and killed in Oakland.

The insurrection that has spread to more than 30 cities is fueled by socialists and anarchists who oppose President Trump and the Republican Party. This rebellion is built on three-and-a-half years during which elites in the liberal media and Democrats in Congress, who refuse to condemn the violence, ranted against our president.

The handful of giant companies that control our channels of communication have found profit in fomenting strife and division among the various groups that make up our body politic. The last week of May the opulent high-tech industry, which evades the brunt of the protests, used its monopoly power to essentially censor the president's words on Twitter.

Twitter's disparagement of President Trump by labeling his tweets would be comical if it were not so dangerous as politically motivated censorship. As a monopoly service provider, Twitter should not be allowed to regulate the statements of a political candidate to the advantage of his opponent in a contested election.

Decades ago, when the broadcast networks dominated politics, Congress passed a law to forbid network television from rejecting political ads based on their content. Another law established the Fairness Doctrine which required broadcast television and radio to present both sides of controversial issues of public importance.

Twitter, Google (which owns YouTube), Facebook (which owns Instagram), and other Big Tech companies enjoy monopoly power and immense wealth due to regulatory advantages conferred on them by government. They do not pay the real costs of the traffic that they attract, from which they profit, and they should not be picking sides in political discourse by placing derogatory labels on postings by political candidates.

Twitter gets its internet traffic without paying a dime for it. This free-riding by Twitter, Google and Facebook

enable them to punish viewpoints they disfavor, in demeaning and sometimes secretive ways.

Google, meanwhile, uses secret algorithms that provide greater visibility to liberal websites and YouTube videos, while suppressing conservative views. According to a lawsuit in England, this is one way that Google uses its market power to choke off competition.

A court there has told Google either to produce its search engine algorithm by which it ranks websites in response to searches, or drop its defense to a lawsuit. The Trump Administration need not wait for a British court to compel transparency by the American behemoth, and the Federal Communications Commission should order Big Tech to disclose more than it has.

## How Rioting Ended the Shutdown

After two full weeks of mass demonstrations, protests, riots and civil disorders in over 30 cities, many law-abiding Americans are wondering why we were forced to comply with stay-home orders. Tens of thousands of people have congregated in confined public spaces for “mostly peaceful” protests, many of them not wearing masks except to avoid being seen on video while they were looting stores or setting buildings on fire.

Whatever happened to the dire warnings of death and disease if ordinary people ventured outside to meet each other in restaurants, bars, and sporting events? Despite massive crowds filling the streets of our major cities, there is no evidence of any spike in cases of people getting sick from COVID-19 due to these gatherings.

Churches remain closed, unless they limit attendance to 25 people or 25% of capacity and require worshippers to wear masks and stay 6 feet apart from each other. No similar limits or restrictions have been imposed on street protesters, demonstrators, rioters and looters.

Dr. Fauci, Dr. Birx, and other familiar experts from the CDC are suddenly nowhere to be found. In their place, “1,288 public health professionals, infectious diseases professionals, and community stakeholders” published a statement declaring that “white supremacy is a lethal public health issue.”

“Protests against systemic racism must be supported,” even if not done safely, the 1,288 public health professionals wrote in their widely circulated manifesto. “Our first statement must be one of unwavering support for those who would dismantle, uproot, or reform racist institutions.”

“This should not be confused with a permissive stance on all gatherings, particularly protests against stay-home orders” like those who peacefully gathered outside the Michigan State Capitol last month, the experts continued. Those entirely peaceful protests, the experts agreed, were “rooted in white nationalism and run contrary to respect

for Black lives.”

One of the peaceful Michigan protesters was Karl Manke, a 77-year-old barber in Owosso, a town of 15,000 people in central Michigan. A judge in Michigan’s Shiawassee County issued an order that Manke’s barber shop “shall be locked and closed,” and agents from the state attorney general’s office showed up in Owosso to enforce the order.

Manke appealed that decision to the Michigan Supreme Court, which summarily overturned it. The order shutting Manke’s barber shop without full briefing and argument was “extraordinary” and “inexplicable,” Justice David Viviano wrote on June 5.

“Courts decide legal questions according to the rule of law,” Justice Viviano continued. “One hopes that this great principle— essential to any free society, including ours — will not itself become yet another casualty of COVID-19.”

In Altamahaw, North Carolina, population 347, Ace Speedway was the scene of stock-car racing the last weekend in May for over 2,000 spectators. The crowd that half-filled the 5,000-seat stands was far in excess of the 25-person limit imposed by Democratic Governor Roy Cooper, whose antics are preventing the Republican Convention from meeting in Charlotte in late August.

A sign outside the speedway advertised: “This Event is held in Peaceful Protest of Injustice and Inequality Everywhere.” The Alamance County Sheriff refused to issue a citation because, he said, “my citizens have basically been singled out for the same alleged violations that are occurring all over the State of North Carolina.”

One after another, so-called experts on public health have been proven wrong and forced to revise their earlier statements. The latest about-face comes from the discredited World Health Organization (WHO) which admitted on June 8 that it is actually “very rare” to catch COVID-19 from an asymptomatic carrier — someone who is not coughing or sneezing droplets into the air.

That contradicts the main reason that was given to justify the nationwide shutdown of our economy: fear of infection from people who do not appear to be sick. In the immortal words of Gilda Radner, who was a regular on Saturday Night Live in the 1970s, “Never mind!”

The two most distinguished medical journals in the world are *The Lancet*, which is based in England, and *The New England Journal of Medicine*. At the end of May both journals were forced to retract studies purporting to show that hydroxychloroquine, the same drug that President Trump took (in combination with zinc) to prevent COVID-19, was not only useless but harmful, and even resulted in death.

Both studies claimed to rely on data from many countries around the world, but when suspicious

researchers asked to see the raw data, the authors refused to reveal it. These leading medical journals rushed into print with articles that were obviously intended to embarrass President Trump.

Although hydroxychloroquine is approved for off-label use to treat and prevent COVID-19, a number of federal and state restrictions have made it hard to get, even with a doctor's prescription. Over 35 states have limited its availability, and five states have rules that prohibit doctors from prescribing the drug as a preventive measure.

## **Government Unions Should Bear Their Share**

Government unions should not be shifting the costs of the shutdowns to the laid-off employees of private businesses. Yet that is the approach sought by Democratic governors of large states as they demand massive bailouts of their government workers who have sat idly by.

Public schools have long been closed throughout the country, and their bloated bureaucrats have enjoyed an extended vacation at home. They should not receive paychecks, at public expense, which are being denied to waitresses, manicurists, and hair stylists.

The sooner everyone is allowed to get back to work, the better. But in the meantime it is terribly unfair to shift the burden of being out of work from government workers' unions onto the backs of those who toil for less money and pensions in the private sector.

Yet that is what liberal Democratic governors seek by demanding massive federal bailouts for their state and local governments. Public school teachers and other government workers should be bearing an equal amount of loss from the work stoppage, rather than being propped up by extraordinary handouts.

While businesses have laid off or furloughed millions of workers, Democrat-controlled "blue" states have not. We should be hearing less news about private businesses having to let go of their workers, and more news about blue state governors needing to trim their oversized bureaucracies.

"Why should the people and taxpayers of America be bailing out poorly run states ... and cities, in all cases Democrat run and managed, when most of the other states are not looking for bailout help?" Trump aptly tweeted.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell suggested that the poorly run states be allowed to file for bankruptcy, but that is not the answer either. That approach would reward those in control and a pile of attorneys, while leaving creditors holding the bag on defaulted loans and diminishing the ability of other states to obtain favorable credit.

Instead, liberals should cut state and local spending, which is something they have never been willing to do. The belt-tightening should include scaling back the luxurious pensions for state workers at taxpayer expense.

McConnell is right to take the position that "there's not going to be any desire on the Republican side to bail out state pensions by borrowing money from future generations." Government employees have no greater entitlement to paychecks for not working.

Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is suggesting an income guarantee for every American. But instead of trying to put everyone on the government payroll, Pelosi and other Democrats should be downsizing the government workforce.

The United States Bankruptcy Code has long prohibited states from filing for bankruptcy to avoid their obligations for the same reasons that many other debts are not dischargeable in personal bankruptcies. Meanwhile new money, such as bailouts, should only be for new services and not for old debt like pensions.

Many of the same states seeking a federal bailout now have repeatedly defied efforts by the Trump Administration to rein in the runaway costs of illegal immigration. New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has repudiated federal policy against illegal immigration by issuing drivers' licenses to attract more illegals.

Now Cuomo declares that McConnell is somehow being "vicious" by opposing handouts to his and similar states. Cuomo epitomizes the entitlement mentality that snaps at whoever objects to sending them more money.

Cuomo failed to protect health care workers in his state, who toiled on behalf of coronavirus patients without the benefits of proper masks or access to prophylactic use of hydroxychloroquine. Cuomo insisted on placing people infected with COVID-19 in nursing homes where it quickly spread and unnecessarily killed many thousands of elderly residents.

Meanwhile Cuomo has failed to take fiscally responsible measures in trimming expenses of state government, even though millions of workers for small businesses have been laid off. Families of laid-off workers should not be required to pay for Cuomo's state employees to do little at home.

McConnell kept funding for state governments out of the most recent bailout bill, which Trump signed into law on March 27. Resistance to these bills is growing, and congressmen are recognizing that their constituents do not want an endless stream of trillion-dollar "stimulus" packages.

Biden, whose mind seems as quarantined as his body, scoffs at the \$2 trillion spending bill by saying it is not nearly enough. His promises to spend far more in exploitation of this crisis must be rejected.

## Don't Bail Out the Shutdown States

A proposal by two senators to send \$500 billion to state governments, due to the coronavirus, would be a horrible incentive. It would encourage governors to keep their economies closed despite their losses in tax revenues from the lack of business activity.

Some Republican-led states have courageously reopened or remained open for business, and their money should not be taken and sent to mostly Democrat-controlled states who ordered people to stop working. States should have an incentive to reopen, as the Republican Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia did, rather than receiving bailouts to remain closed.

Yet Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) want to appropriate a half-trillion dollars to state governments in addition to the \$150 billion which one bailout bill already sent to them. These handouts to state governments would remove the fiscal pressure to reopen their economies.

Under Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy, New Jersey has impeded access to early and prophylactic treatment for COVID-19 in non-hospitalized patients, resulting in avoidable deaths from the virus. Gov. Murphy has also infringed on the rights of outspoken, law-abiding residents who seek an end to the overly broad shutdown.

New Jerseyan Kim Pagan faces up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine for merely organizing a peaceful protest, which is a constitutional right, against the suffocating stay-at-home order by Gov. Murphy. But then Gov. Murphy himself attended two Black Lives Matter protests, and Pagan's attorney announced that he would sue Murphy for his arbitrary enforcement of laws.

Availability of early and preventive use of medication to guard against harm by the coronavirus would enable all states to safely open. Yet Democratic governors continue to block access to life-saving medication such as hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), and deny its use until a coronavirus victim is hospitalized near death and cannot be saved by any treatment.

Democratic Gov. Murphy has prohibited early access by requiring a positive test result on all prescriptions for HCQ, which many credit for helping them recover from COVID-19 if used early. An early study of 973 patients in France showed remarkably better results for patients who were given HCQ as an early treatment along with azithromycin, and numerous studies since have likewise shown success with HCQ.

The French researchers concluded that HCQ medication "is a safe and efficient treatment for COVID-19," yet it remains blocked for millions of Americans exposed to or infected by the virus. Nursing home residents are sitting ducks for this virus as they are denied this medication until they get too sick for any medication to help them.

The peaceful protests in May at state capitols against the shutdowns illustrated how badly governors, mostly Democrats, have handled this crisis. President Trump himself expressed support for the peaceful protesters seeking to reopen the economy, and voiced his own objections to the ongoing interference with our economy by Democratic governors.

Meanwhile, non-coronavirus patients are being denied medical procedures and treatments which they need. Health care workers are being laid off throughout the country because ordinary medical care was prohibited by the shutdown orders.

Massive bailouts to hospitals sent them money for not being available to the public. These created the wrong incentive of perpetuating the shutdowns rather than allowing healthy economic pressure to force reopening.

President Trump could invoke his emergency powers to override state governors who interfere with our economy and block access to needed medical treatments. If we were in a conventional war, the president would prohibit interference by state officials with war-related efforts.

Yet some Democratic governors seem to be driven by ego rather than doing what is best for their residents. New York's Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo was in a nasty spat with the Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City over who got to decide if public schools there would remain closed for the rest of the school year (they did remain closed).

In 1992, Democratic Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida blocked efforts by President George H.W. Bush to help victims of Hurricane Andrew, which ravaged that state shortly before the presidential election. President Bush then stood down and was predictably blamed by the media for not doing more, when instead he should have overridden the politically motivated interference.

Democrats have an election-year political incentive to undermine everything Trump does, as much as his opponents possibly can. Meanwhile, Trump has repeatedly warned that the cure for COVID-19 would be worse than the disease if "the greatest economy in the history of our country" is damaged beyond repair, but Democrats seem unconcerned.

Trump is working daily to restore the old normal, where Americans had no fear of crowding together in restaurants, bars, and sports stadiums. Federal funds should not be sent to Democratic governors who resist reopening.

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