

April 25, 2020

Dear Mayor Brand,

I am writing to you as a citizen of the city of Fresno in opposition to your shelter-at-home orders. The order is a fundamental abridgement of our natural and constitutional rights. At the time of the initial order, the Fresno County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) was not recommending closing schools, let alone ordering healthy individuals to stay in their homes and stop working.

Unlike you, our family (and many others) does not have a guaranteed salary, health insurance, and pension, so the economic effects of your order has been of great concern to me. I am also gravely concerned about the over-reach of government at various levels, eroding our basic civil rights. Last, but not least, I am alert to the potential secondary effects of these policies on the mental and physical health of individuals and their impact on crime, violence, and suicide.

I could detail how the timing of your order created additional, unnecessary stress on our family just as we ventured to open a new business this spring. But, instead, I'll focus on the purported purpose of locking down the citizens of Fresno, and whether there is a metric to know when to re-open.

In March, various sources informed the public that we needed to "Flatten the Curve." The reason given was that our hospitals were at risk of being over-run if we did not slow the spread of coronavirus. When Fresno city (and the schools) were shutdown, I was confused, since there were only 2 known cases of coronavirus in our county at the time, and they were both travel-related. That is, FCDPH stated that it had no evidence of community transmission in this area.

On March 18th, there was no curve. I could not understand how you could "flatten" something that doesn't exist.

I don't recall any explanation from you on the scientific basis for locking down the city prior to any community transmission. I don't recall any explanation from you on the economic models of what shuttering businesses would do to our local economy. I don't recall any explanation from you about the sociologists and psychologists you consulted on the effects on the human psyche of the hundreds of thousands of citizens affected by your order. This reveals an astonishing lack of leadership.

You could have chosen, in mid-March, to give the citizens of Fresno as much information as possible to arm ourselves against this pandemic. You could have encouraged us to take responsible actions to protect our community. You could have treated us like adults capable of making compassionate choices. Instead you chose to treat us like children, ordering us to behave, "Or else!" And you did so with almost no explanation about what the costs and benefits were that you weighed.

We can now fast-forward to your first and second extensions of the shelter-in-place order, on March 26 and April 8. Here is the data for Fresno County from the CA DPH for those dates:

	<i>Deaths</i>	<i>New cases confirmed (suspected)</i>	<i>ICU beds</i>	<i>% hospital capacity (ICU beds)</i>
<i>Mar 26</i>	0	4	Unknown (< 22 based on est. total cases)	< 17.5% (based on est. total cases)
<i>Apr 8</i>	3	22 (63)	10 (8)	12.1% (including suspected)

As of yesterday, April 24, ICU capacity in Fresno County is at 13.4%.

What am I missing? We were well below hospital ICU capacity both of the times that you extended the lockdown. It appears, now, that we hit our peak hospital capacity sometime between April 4-7. This corresponds with the national peak in deaths, while the statewide California peak in deaths is estimated to have been on April 11. The point is that it was very clear that our hospitals were not in danger of being over-run. What metric were you using to determine that the lockdown needed to be extended? What would ICU capacity have to have been in order for you to lift the lockdown?

In the meantime, our local economy and the citizens of the city of Fresno are suffering from the economic and psychological trauma your shut-down has wrought. Our constitutional rights have been abrogated to the dust-bin at your hands. I urge you to start treating your constituents like adults, and start respecting our God-given rights to peaceably assemble, migrate and engage in commerce. Give us the facts, share with us your concerns, and request our compliance. **That** would be true leadership.

Sincerely,

Kathryn Muratore, PhD