



A FULL YEAR OF LIVING UNDER 'EMERGENCY' ORDERS

As I write this, we are a year to the day after Maryland Governor Hogan imposed his first of numerous covid-19 emergency orders restricting the freedoms and liberties of citizens and their businesses. The initial plan was to reduce the pending run on hospital beds. Citizens considered the 15 day emergency order that would *flatten the curve* and *slow the spread* reasonable ... especially when sold images of ambulances lined up outside hospitals and freezer trucks filled to capacity with occupied body bags.

Today, one year later and a far cry from hospitals being at capacity, Governor Hogan's latest decree has, "*lifted most of the state's restrictions on economic activity.*" This most recent diktat removes capacity limits on restaurants and bars. Or does it? The order still requires that on-premise patrons must be seated, tables must be at least six feet apart, and masking as well as distancing requirements remain in effect. "Patrons may not stand at a crowded bar," Hogan instructed.

Lifting capacity limits while keeping distancing is not lifting capacity.

Jim Breuer of Maggie's Restaurant in Westminster, MD doesn't think much will change, "Maggie's might be able to add a few tables for customers, but with the other restrictions still in place and depending on the size of the building it really doesn't make a whole lot of difference."

THE BIGGER PICTURE

Something very unfortunate has happened. It most likely has been happening slowly over time, but covid-19 shined a spotlight on it.

It's one thing to be an expert within a field of study and be able to relay information to others giving them the ability to weigh that information and make informed decisions. It's an entirely different situation when the experts enforce what they think is best and remove the consent piece of the

equation. Informed consent is something practiced within the medical field. A doctor will diagnose the problem and then recommend treatment.

Recommend, not mandate. This is because the doctor does not know what is of value to the individual. The doctor (the expert) is to diagnose/inform, not make the decision how to proceed. **We the people are the experts when it comes to our lives.**

Here in the United States, this principle is the bedrock of our government's authority, "...consent of the governed..."

The emergency orders that Governor Hogan and the other executive and bureaucratic leaders have imposed do not take into account the freedom of an individual to make an informed decision. In making these judgments for us, these experts have removed the informed consent piece from the equation.

We now have a year's worth of covid-19 information and data. We the people can make our own informed decisions based on what we value as important to our own well-being. Having a government official decide what is best for everyone is antithetical to individual liberty.

SIDE NOTE...

You know who can override the governor's emergency order? Here's a hint...

Due to covid-19, the public (Maryland's citizens) have been barred from the **General Assembly** and the State House. This has removed citizen influence on those who represent us. Hogan was asked if his order lifting the capacity restrictions applies to the State House, where the General Assembly is still in session through April 12. Hogan's response, "No."

Consent of the governed...? ■

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