

Gloria Sitton

From: Joshua Bowman <mrbeaujo@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, September 11, 2020 4:30 PM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Written Statement for September 12 Council Meeting - Docket #15

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

While I will not be able to attend the virtual meeting, I ask that the following statement be read into the record.

Good Morning,

This hearing is exactly six months to the day since Governor Northam declared a state of emergency for the coronavirus pandemic. In that time, Virginia has seen multiple waves of the virus, first in the northern part of the state and then in the Tidewater and southwest regions. While new cases continue to be reported, the data clearly show that the worst is behind us. This proposed ordinance would mandate stricter measures at a time when we should be emphasizing continued vigilance and maintaining precautions which have already been shown to be effective.

According to the Johns Hopkins aggregation of pandemic data, there has not been a single death from COVID reported in the City of Alexandria for two weeks. In the past month, the number of deaths is in the low single digits. According to the Virginia Department of Health, there are only something like 50 patients hospitalized across the entire northern region which encompasses several million people. It is puzzling why this ordinance is being proposed now, when the available evidence suggests that current measures are sufficient to continue bringing down the rate of infection, and most importantly, the number of deaths from COVID. Additionally, there is no provision to relax these stricter provisions based on any public health metrics.

At the same time, there is a growing consensus that being outdoors mitigates the spread of the coronavirus. Likewise, the viral load necessary to cause a severe infection requires far longer exposure than the incidental contact that might be expected while walking along the sidewalk or bicycling along the Mount Vernon trail. The language of the proposed ordinance, however, makes no distinction between incidental contact and prolonged exposure nor the number of people who might be engaged in low-contact activities in an outdoor space. Shouldn't there be some threshold based on the number of people congregating and the size of a given area to determine what level of crowding represents a genuine public health hazard?

Finally, there is no provision in the ordinance for clearly posting signage when and where compliance actions are taking place. If a small group of friends are having a picnic in the park, will they be randomly harassed by a city employee as soon as they finish their meal? Will I be stopped while walking my dog if some busybody neighbor calls in a complaint? There is no way that the city will have the resources to enforce such a broadly worded ordinance evenly across the city, so some people will be singled out over others. What plans does the city have in place to ensure the scattershot enforcement of this impractical mandate is not enforced in a prejudicial manner?

Therefore, Mr. Mayor and Councillors, this ordinance fails on multiple counts. It is not responsive to any public health data or metrics showing an increase in infections. It does not rely on scientific understanding of how disease spreads from different types of outdoor activities or the degree of contact. It cannot possibly be enforced in a uniform and predictable manner. In short, this ordinance is arbitrary and capricious and will do nothing to improve the health of the citizens of our fair city, but is an exercise in futility. If it cannot be amended to be based on public health data, scientific evidence, and principles of fairness, it must be rejected.

Respectfully,
- Joshua Bowman

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

15
9-12-20

Gloria Sitton

From: Ayne Furman <l_foot_r@hotmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 07, 2020 8:02 PM
To: City Council
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Pro required masks

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Completed

It is a regular occurrence that folks walk/run on the narrow sidewalks of the SE Quadrant of Old Town without face masks. Frequently, these folks will not attempt to social distance when we get close to each other. This requires me, and sometimes with my dog to step out into the street with oncoming traffic. YIKES!! What other options do I have to avoid my rude, inconsiderate and **un-masked** fellow Alexandrians? Please require face masks, and make the ordinance simple. "Face masks are required outdoors in ALL public spaces". Even runner** and bike riders.

** Runners tend to be the worst offenders, not wearing a face coverings, they do not want to move off the sidewalks to allow social distancing and I have even had them exhale on me.

Let's work as a true community and do what is safest for our neighbors, not what is easiest and most comfortable for the few.

Ayne Furman, DPM
Cell: 703-628-6662

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

**ALEXANDRIA CITY COUNCIL MEETING
SEPTEMBER 8, 2020**

**PREPARED STATEMENT
OF
BRIAN J. LEE
ALEXANDRIA CITIZEN**

I would like to speak in opposition to the proposed ordinance.

I would like to make three simple points, which support my view that it makes no sense to mandate stricter preventative protocols at this point in Northern Virginia. Most importantly, a mask mandate is not “cost free.” It exacts a huge mental, emotional, and social cost on the citizens of Alexandria. This results in suicides, substance abuse, and overdose deaths that *will* also produce a drastic negative financial and human cost on our community. Furthermore, Alexandria has passed the peak of coronavirus and is at extremely low risk to a new surge. Finally, masks have not been shown to be effective in changing community infection trajectories..

It makes no sense to implement stronger preventive measures at this point, when Northern Virginia has clearly passed the peak of coronavirus infections. The cost is too high, and no benefits have been demonstrated.

1. Cost — There is a massive human health and well-being cost to wearing face coverings that has not been considered by the City Council.

- a. Line 40 of the Coversheet of the proposed ordinance states the “Estimated Cost of Implementation” of this ordinance is “none.” This may reflect a zero direct financial cost to the city budget, but it does not reflect a massive cost in human well-being, in addition to the financial impact of suicide, substance abuse, and overdose deaths.
- b. The CDC “Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report” for August 14, 2020 (<https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/pdfs/mm6932a1-H.pdf>) highlighted the tremendous impact of COVID-19 on mental and behavioral health.
 - i. One “lowlight” of this report: 25.5% of Americans age 18-24 seriously considered suicide in the previous 30 days, 16% of those aged 25-44.
 - ii. Those numbers are drastically higher than previous survey reports, which considered a much greater time span for suicidal thoughts (previous year vs. previous month).
- c. Masks result in isolation, fear, lack of human contact, anxiety, and sense of panic that is driving a surge in deaths and injuries of despair: suicide, overdoses, and substance abuse.
- d. The social and emotional impact has fallen disproportionately on children and younger Americans.

2. Timing — Why now? The peak has passed, and Northern Virginia is not at risk of a surge in cases, hospitalizations, or deaths.

- a. The proposed ordinance expires at the time the Declaration of Local Emergency expires (page 5, line 22). The Local Declaration is currently set to expire on September 30 (page 1, line 24) — unless amended — and the Ordinance goes into effect on October 1, *after the expiration* of the Declaration.
 - i. If the Ordinance is adopted tonight, wouldn't it immediately expire, given the current lack of a Declaration of Local Emergency on October 1?
 - ii. This Ordinance therefore is drafted *presuming* the extension of the Declaration of Local Emergency.
 - iii. Shouldn't the City Council weigh — in the light of current evidence — an extension of the Local Declaration *before* considering the expansion of its mandates under the authority of that Declaration?
- b. Regarding that evidence, why *increase* preventive measures when the worst of the pandemic has already passed through our region?
- c. VDH data show that the summer surge had virtually no impact on Northern Virginia, which remains well below pandemic levels
<https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus/covid-19-in-virginia-cases/>
 - i. Figures 1 – 3 show Virginia Department of Health statistics for Cases, Deaths, and Hospitalizations. *Note that I have “stretched” each chart so they display roughly equivalent scale on the vertical axis.* Each Figure compares three charts:
 1. Statewide, showing “summer surge”
 2. Statewide, excluding Northern Virginia, showing “summer surge”
 3. Northern Virginia Only, showing “no summer surge”
 - ii. The figures show that while there was a statewide surge in cases, deaths, and hospitalizations during the late summer of 2020 (July – August), this surge DID NOT include Northern Virginia. The statewide surge was driven *entirely* by the rest of the state, *not Northern Virginia*.
 - iii. Why not? Northern Virginia accounted for the majority of Virginia's cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in the spring. The novel coronavirus followed a standard infection curve for epidemics, which provided a level of community exposure that clearly limited our susceptibility to the summer surge.

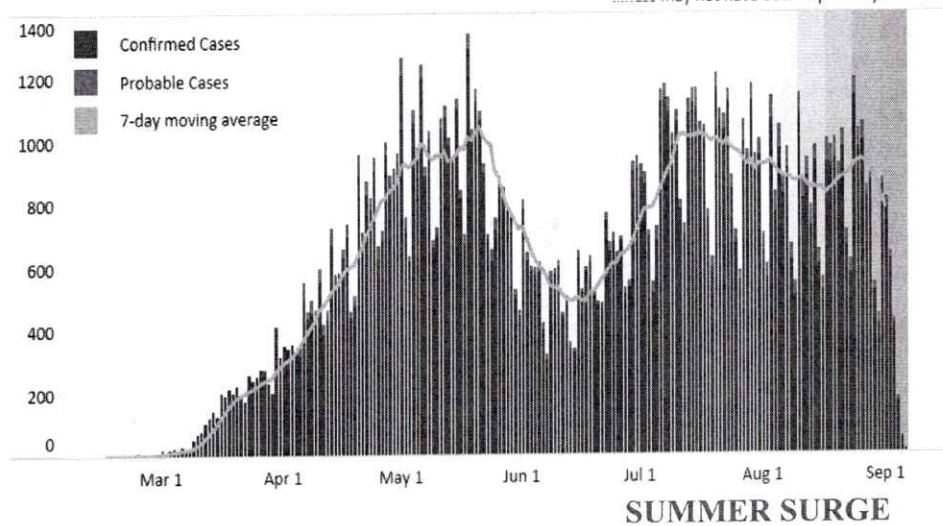
3. Evidence — There is little to no evidence in supporting the case that mask mandates stem the spread in communities, and much evidence that there is zero correlation of effectiveness.

- a. This is why the WHO *does not* recommend mask mandates. Neither did CDC prior to 2019.
- b. I am not speaking of laboratory studies, but real-world evidence of mask mandates and their impact on coronavirus spread in local communities, which is lacking.
 - i. Masks have either been mandated after peak, resulting in no change of trajectory (Italy), or before peak, not preventing increased spread as claimed.
 - ii. See Figure 4 for a selection of charts showing no correlation between mask mandates and reduction in community infection. Examples could easily be multiplied.

**FIGURE 1:
COMPARISON OF CASES IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND REST OF STATE**

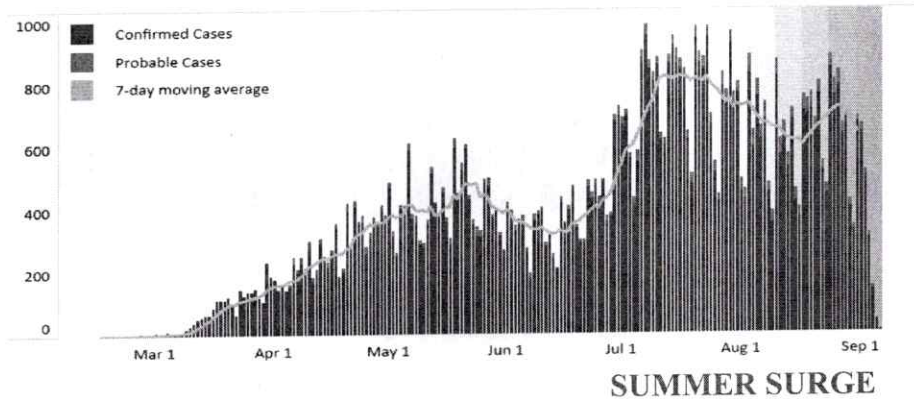
ALL VIRGINIA CASES (VDH, 9/7/20)

800
Cases



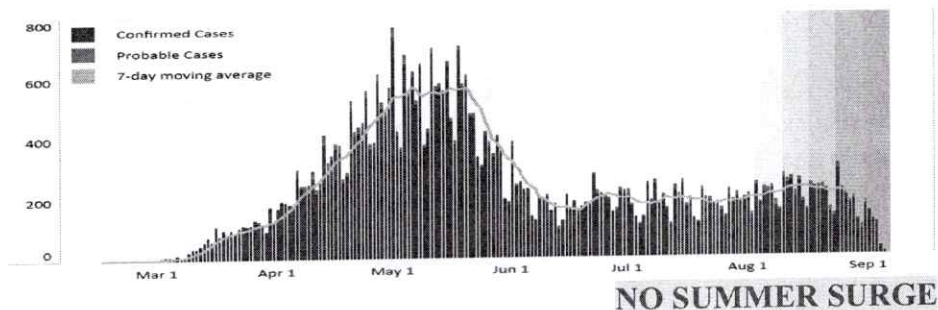
VIRGINIA EXCLUDING NORTHERN REGION CASES (VDH, 9/7/20)

800
Cases



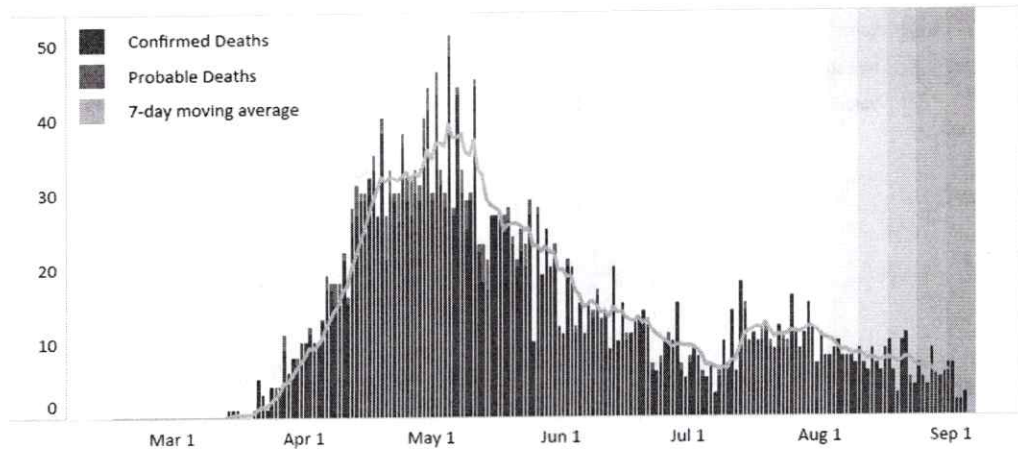
NORTHERN VIRGINIA CASES (VDH, 9/7/20)

800
Cases



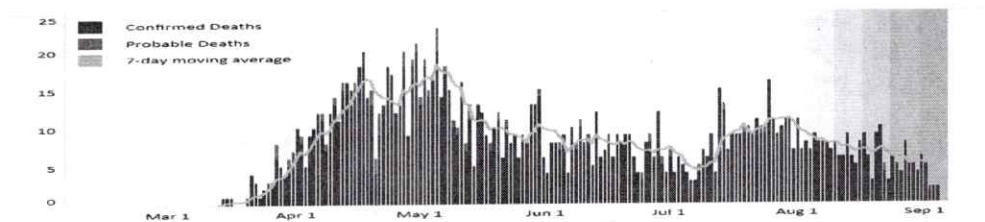
**FIGURE 2:
COMPARISON OF CASES IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA AND REST OF STATE**

ALL VIRGINIA DEATHS (VDH, 9/7/20)



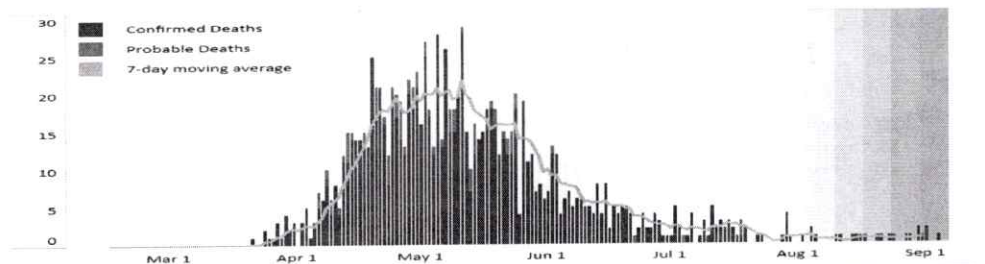
SUMMER SURGE (SMALL)

VIRGINIA EXCLUDING NORTHERN REGION DEATHS (VDH, 9/7/20)



SUMMER SURGE (SMALL)

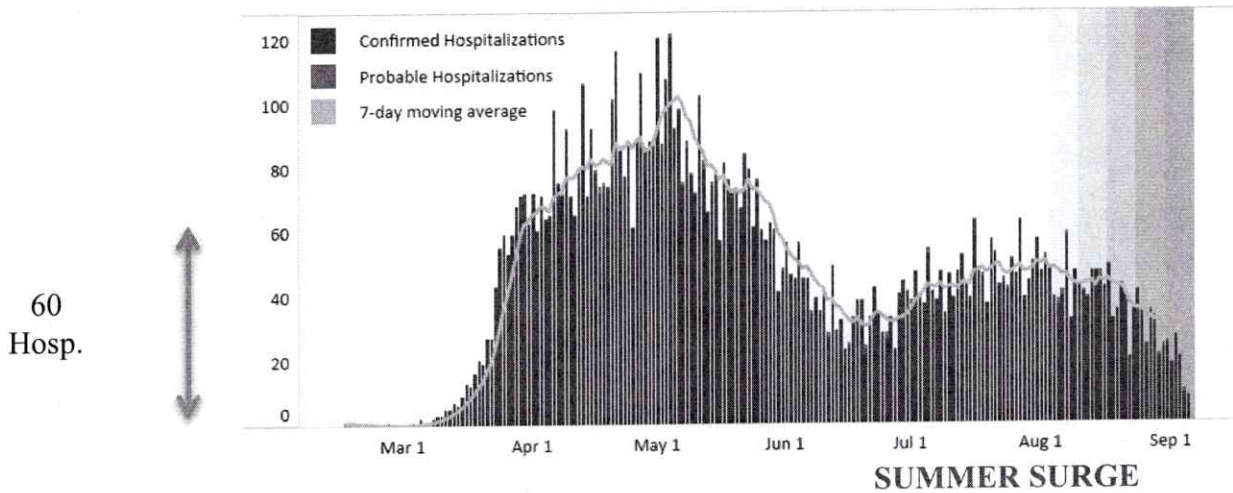
NORTHERN VIRGINIA DEATHS (VDH, 9/7/20)



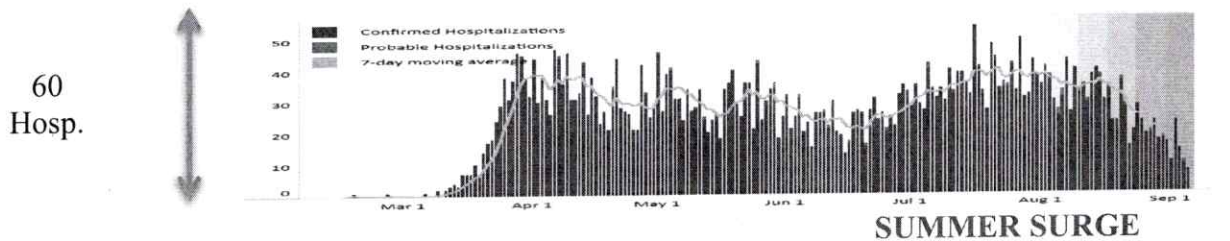
NO SUMMER SURGE

FIGURE 3: HOSPITALIZATIONS IN NORTHERN VIRGINIA VS. REST OF STATE

ALL VIRGINIA HOSPITALIZATIONS (VDH, 9/7/20)



VIRGINIA EXCLUDING NORTHERN REGION HOSPITALIZATIONS (VDH, 9/7/20)



NORTHERN VIRGINIA HOSPITALIZATIONS (VDH, 9/7/20)

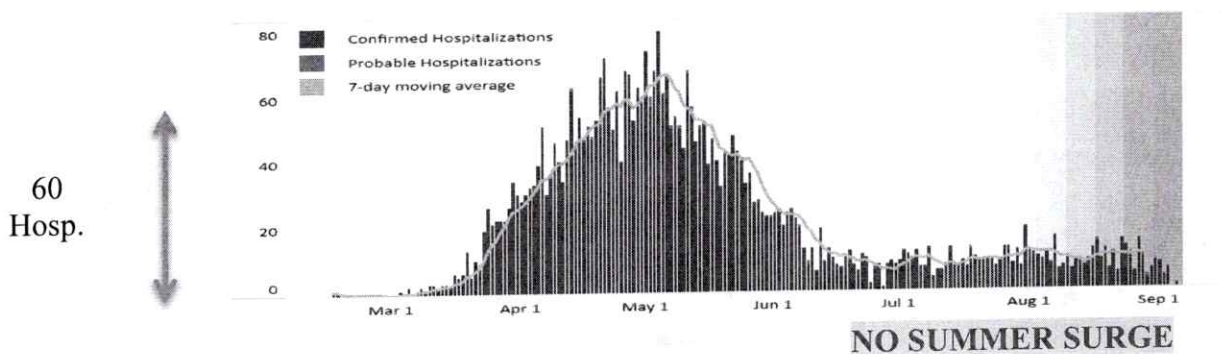
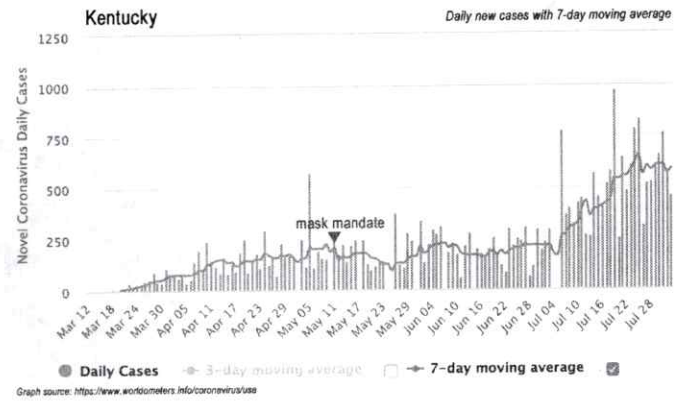
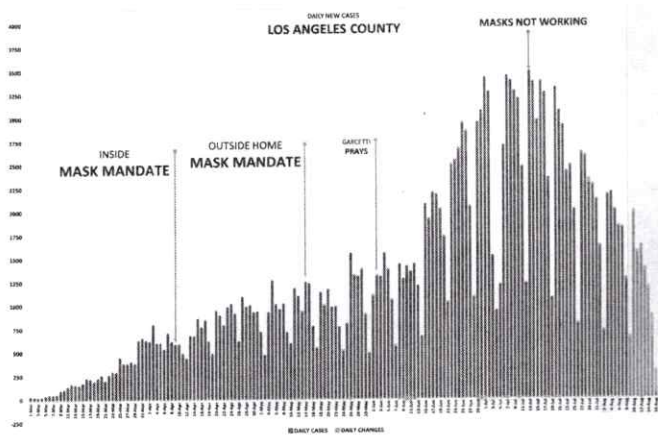
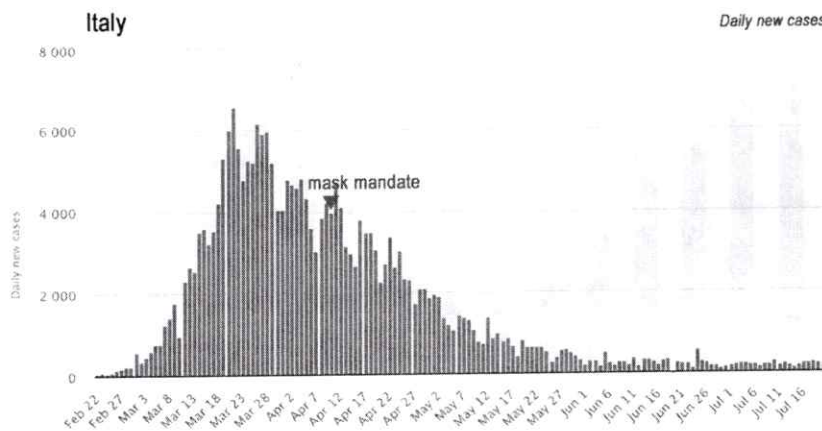
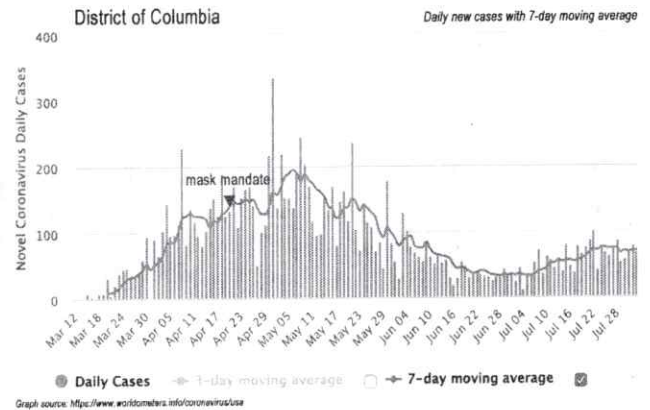
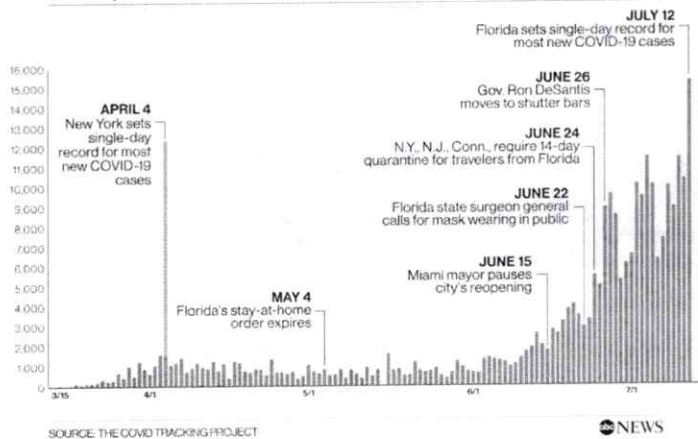


FIGURE 4: MASK MANDATES AND CASE SPREAD, SELECTED CHARTS



Daily New Coronavirus Cases In Florida



15
9-12-20

Gloria Sitton

From: Andrews, Kelly J. <ANDREWSK@SEC.GOV>
Sent: Wednesday, September 09, 2020 11:30 AM
To: Gloria Sitton
Cc: andrews735@aol.com
Subject: [EXTERNAL]strong support for Docket No. 21-0210 requiring face coverings in certain indoor and outdoor locations

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Dear City Clerk Ms. Sitton:

As a long-time resident of Old Town Alexandria, I strongly encourage the City Council to adopt this proposed ordinance to require face coverings in certain indoor and outdoor locations.

I walk my dog a few times a day and am often passed closely by walkers, joggers and bicyclists who do not wear a mask. I always put my mask up to cover my face and nose when I see folks approaching and also try to get six feet away, as both are recommended by the medical experts to prevent the spread of COVID-19. It is often difficult to get six feet away quickly enough, especially with a dog, and it makes for a frustrating and nerve-wracking experience in my own neighborhood.

In my experience, less than 50% of those outside in Old Town wear a mask when passing close to or talking to someone. Too many folks do not even have a mask with them to put on. And at and near Windmill Park on S. Union Street there are regularly held volley ball and basketball games with no one wearing masks – neither sport allows for social distancing. In addition, I have watched the continued construction of the expensive new condos along the water with little face mask coverings worn by the construction workers. All of this is outrageous during this dangerous and deadly pandemic.

The City must do more to protect its citizens from the disease as well as from its tax paying citizens from having enjoyable and safe walks in their own neighborhood. And passing this ordinance is a step in the right direction.

Thank you,
Kelly Andrews
735 S. Fairfax Street
Alexandria, VA 22314
703.855.4346

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

15
9-12-20

Comments before the Alexandria City Council Public Hearing

Saturday, September 12, 2020

from

Sametta Barnett, Alexandria Resident

Mayor Wilson and members of the City Council, my name is Sametta Barnett, and I am a resident of Alexandria in Rosemont. I am the mother of two school aged children and work for an airline devastated by the global overreaction to an illness which, now that we have eight months of data and a much clearer understanding of who it impacts and how, is seasonal, is far less dangerous to school-aged children than influenza, and poses similar risk as flu to healthy adults under the age of fifty.

If you value truth-telling, believe in "science" as neighborhood signs all encourage, and take seriously your responsibility to lead our community, you will vote against the proposed ordinance to issue an Alexandria-City mask requirement.

I would echo some of the comments made this past Tuesday that a mask mandate is not without cost. Aside from the measurable and direct consequences of mitigation strategies – lockdowns that have led to depression, increased drug use, suicide, job loss, hunger, and unchecked preventable disease - the current state mask mandate has resulted in a degree of irrational fear and nastiness I have never before seen in 25 years in the area. It daily reinforces the natural but damaging human tendency to panic and lash out in the face of an unseen threat. Masks remind us visibly that, despite great indicators, we must still fear for our lives! The current state mask mandate gives license to some to berate and insult fellow citizens in front of their small children – this has happened to me – because, unmasked, they pose an existential threat - even from six feet away!

According to the Virginia Department of Health, Alexandria has an incredibly low community infection rate - only 2% since March, and that rate is likely overstated in the first instance by oversampling areas known to have higher transmission, and in the second by the long-known but only recently reported reality that many positive test results have actually picked up inert and non-infectious viral RNA remnants because of their high cycle thresholds. Only one tenth of a percent of Alexandria's population has been hospitalized from the disease since March, and only 4 hundredths of a percent of the city's population (62) have died from COVID in the same timeframe with just two under the age of 50. And the good trends continue. The seven-day case average has been fewer than 40 since the beginning of June, and fewer than 10 people have been hospitalized daily since April. Frankly, this illness now poses a minimal threat to Alexandria's nearly 160,000 citizens.

Why would the city not tell the good news story of low transmission rates, lower hospitalization rates, and even lower fatality rates, and let us get back to normal? We know so much more about COVID than we did in March. We can confidently say that we don't have to fear imminent death from an unseen foe. With asymptomatic spread now very much in question (see: <https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/08/asymptomatic-coronavirus-patients-arent-spreading-new-infections-who-says.html>; <https://www.acpjournals.org/doi/10.7326/M20-2671>), our symptomless neighbors are not likely vectors of a deadly disease!

I watched a new young child hyperventilate in our school yesterday and cry uncontrollably, no doubt because she was upset at being away from her family, likely for the first time. But add to her distress the fact that all of the adults around her were masked. She couldn't read their facial expressions. She couldn't relate to the unfamiliar people trying to help her overcome her fear of being away from home because those people were scary. Why would we impose this irrational fear city-wide?

The evidence is scant that masking limits the spread of COVID, and in fact it demonstrates pretty clearly that masks do not work to stop or minimize the spread of the virus in a community (see references and charts below). A few regions of the U.S. were mentioned on Tuesday where strict mask mandates have been in place and yet case counts continue to rise. I would point out that the same pattern holds true across the globe. Brazil, Peru, India, Spain, Israel, France and the Philippines all saw significant viral spread after mask mandates were issued. In the case of Italy, the virus was waning long before a mandate went into place. In most locations, the viral curve mimics that of the common flu there each year. Why are we turning our neighbors into enemies and destroying relationships, trust in authority, economic enterprise, and our community's physical and emotional health for an experimental and ineffective placebo that mollifies the nervous?

I would also comment on the redundant nature of this proposal and on its enforcement. First, the Commonwealth has had a mask-wearing order in place since May. That Order sees excellent compliance in this area. Why the City would need to add its own ordinance on top of a valid state order escapes me. Furthermore, authorizing the City Director to deputize any under his authority to issue citations for noncompliance seems foolhardy. Asking city employees to approach the non-masked and interact with them long enough to issue citations would seem to put those same employees at the very risk you say you are trying to prevent. Moreover, I thought the City was having such a tough time budgetarily that it couldn't follow through on pay raises and new hiring proposed in this year's budget. How is adding an unrelated and potentially "risky" job function to our city employees during this period in any way wise? Aren't there better and far more worthwhile endeavors for you and city employees to

undertake, like fixing the significant stormwater flooding problems that are impacting so many of my neighbors?

Finally, I would like to address the ordinance's reliance on World Health Organization guidelines and point out that the WHO has also stated that, "At present, there is no direct evidence (from studies on COVID-19 and in healthy people in the community) on the effectiveness of universal masking of healthy people in the community to prevent infection with respiratory viruses, including COVID-19. The WHO goes on to say, "At the present time, the widespread use of masks by healthy people in the community setting is not yet supported by high quality or direct scientific evidence and there are potential benefits and harms to consider." (see: [https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-\(2019-ncov\)-outbreak](https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/advice-on-the-use-of-masks-in-the-community-during-home-care-and-in-healthcare-settings-in-the-context-of-the-novel-coronavirus-(2019-ncov)-outbreak))

Mr. Mayor and Town Council, please do the right thing here. And that right thing is to vote against the mask ordinance. Thank you for your time.

Additional References:

https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/5/19-0994_article

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0843-2?ContensisTextOnly=true>

<https://www.nature.com/articles/s41591-020-0843-2?ContensisTextOnly=true>

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2006372>

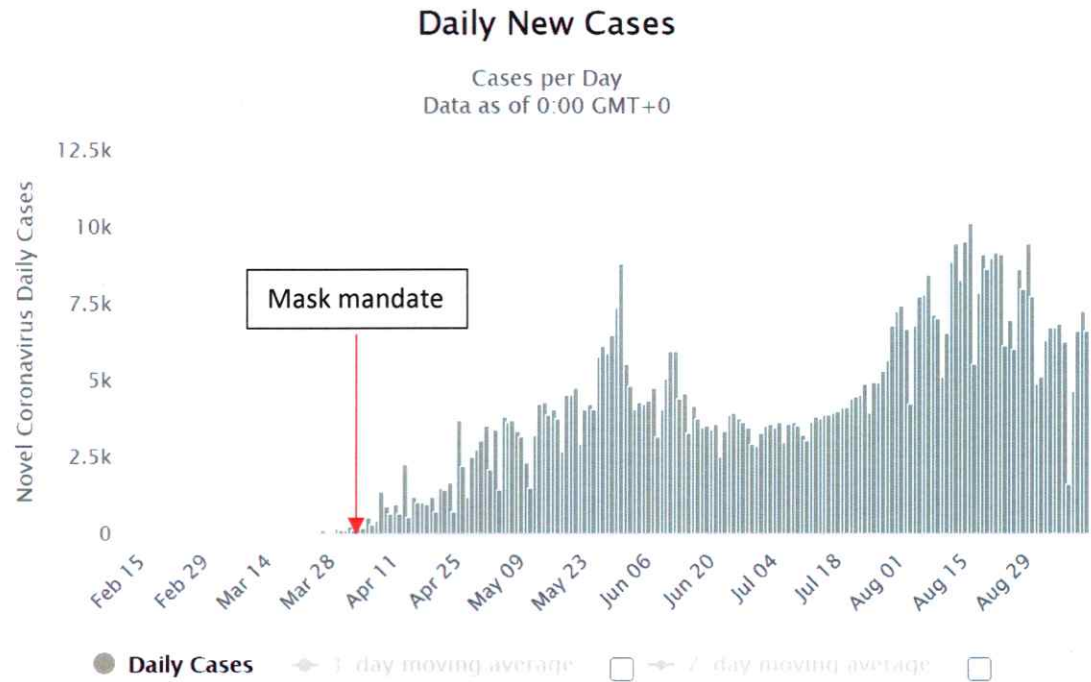
<https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/news-perspective/2020/04/commentary-masks-all-covid-19-not-based-sound-data>

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/275360639_A_cluster_randomised_trial_of_cloth_masks_compared_with_medical_masks_in_healthcare_workers

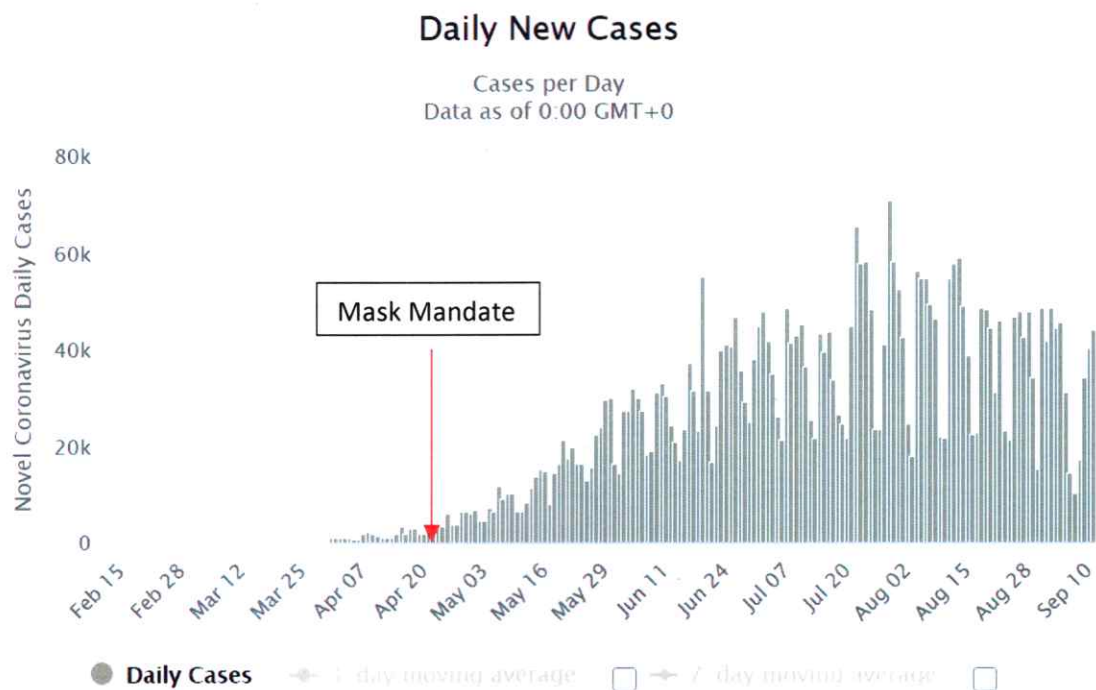
<https://pbs.twimg.com/media/EgNJ-kaWkAMuJqD?format=jpg&name=900x900>

<https://www.nber.org/papers/w27719.pdf>

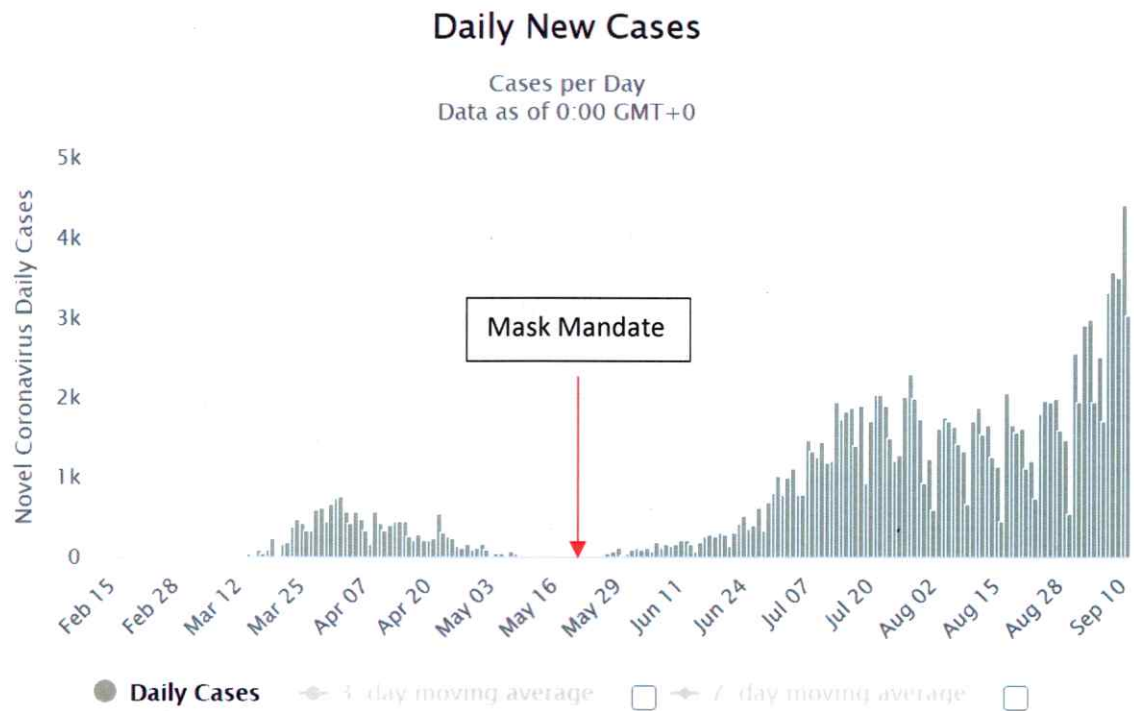
Daily New Cases in Peru



Daily New Cases in Brazil



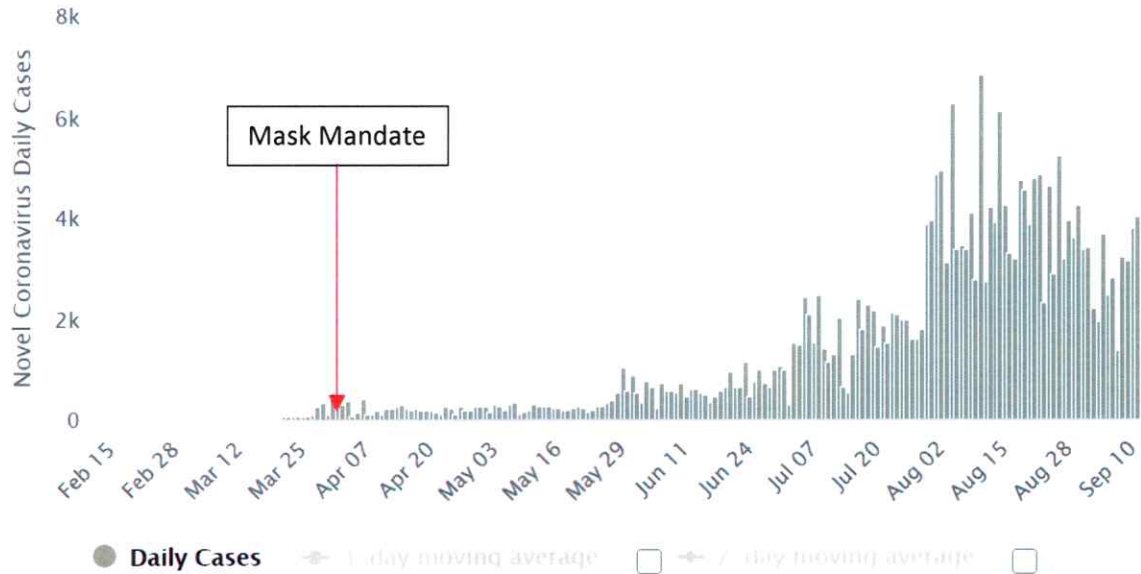
Daily New Cases in Israel



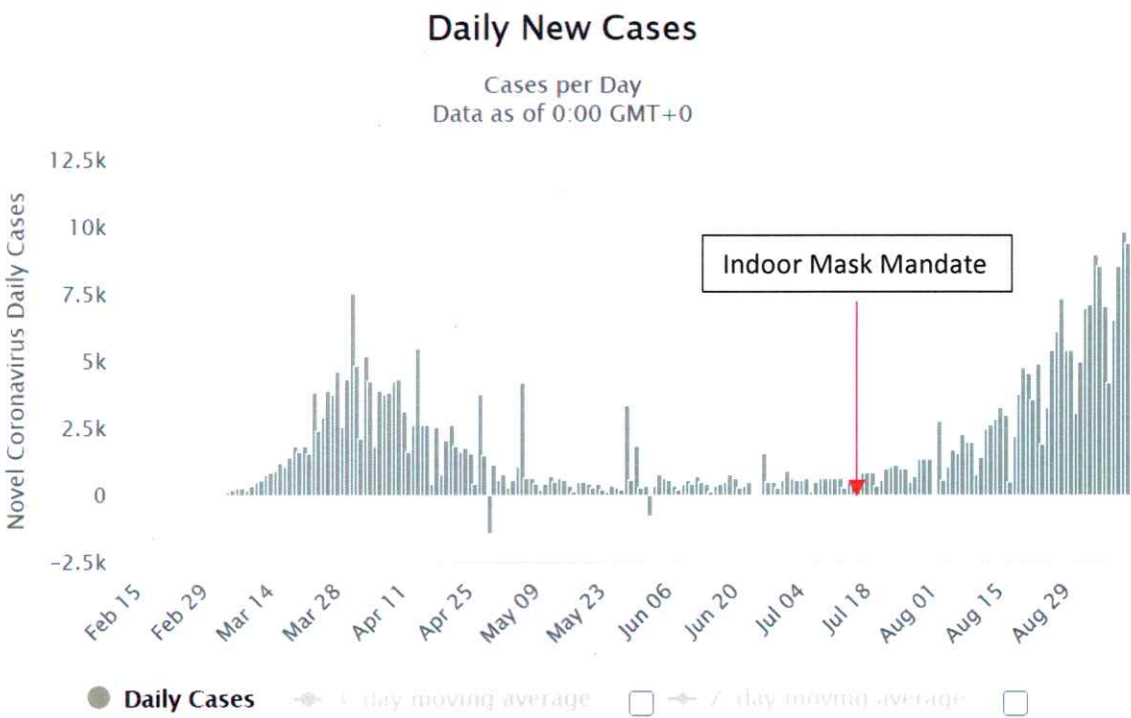
Daily New Cases in the Philippines

Daily New Cases

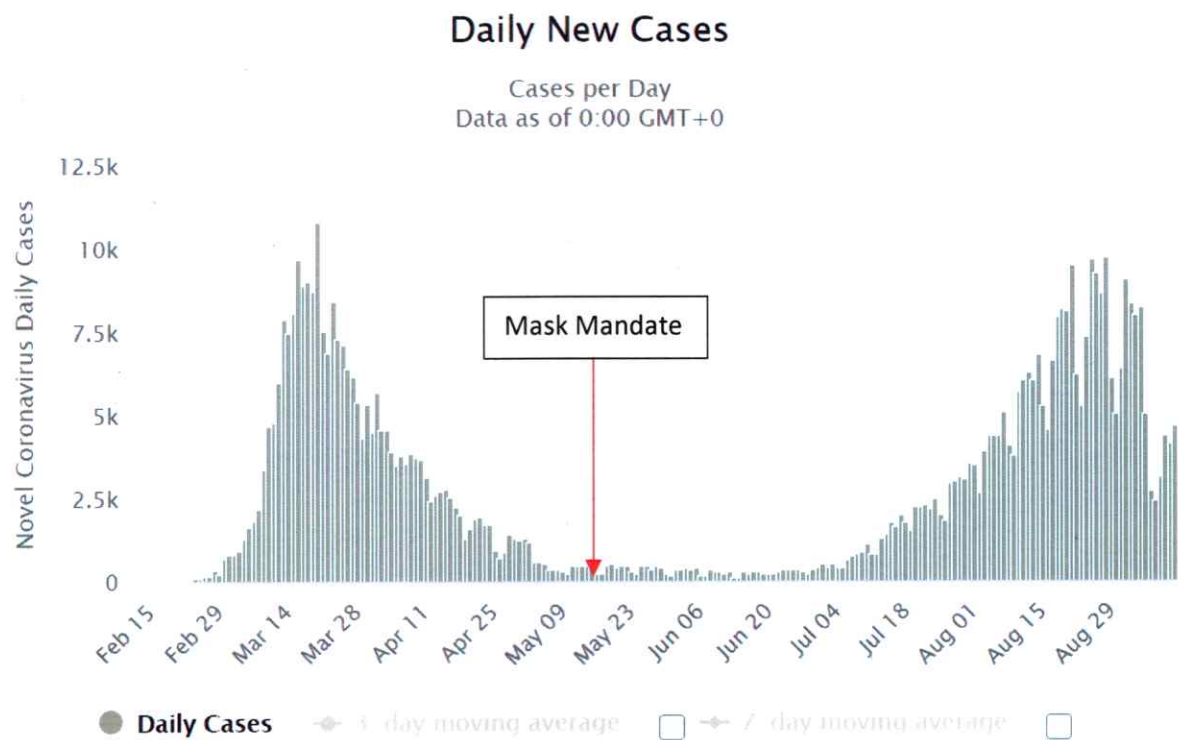
Cases per Day
Data as of 0:00 GMT+0



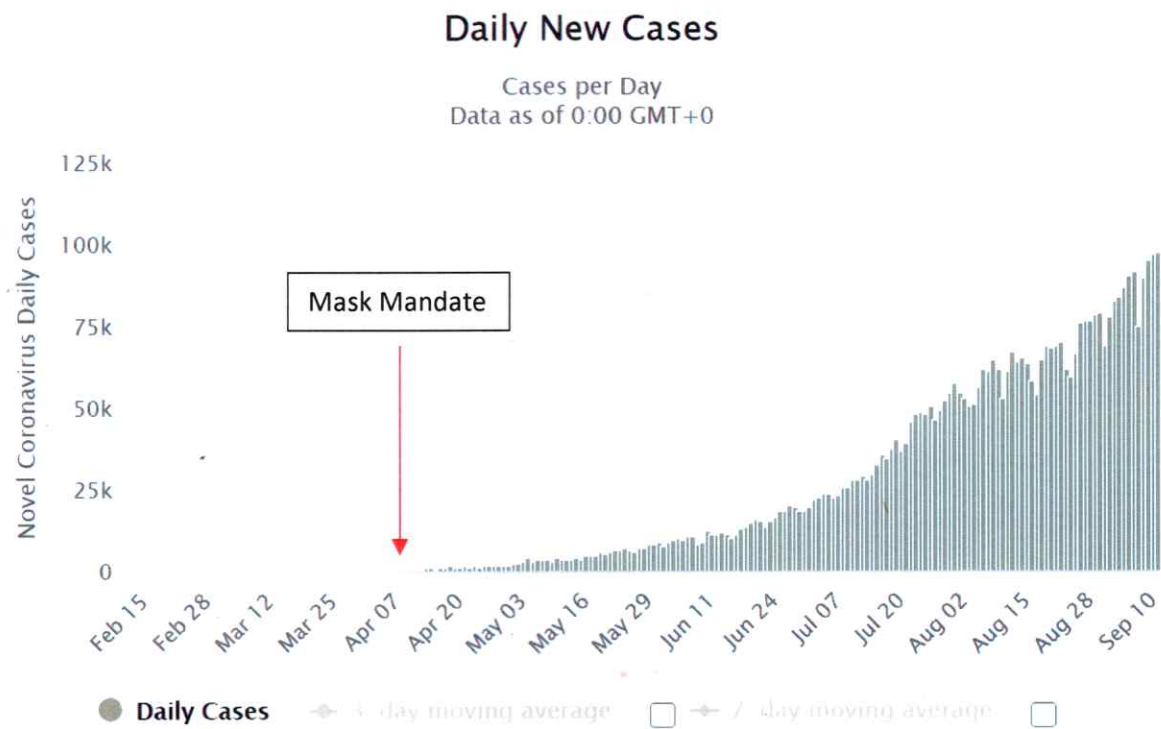
Daily New Cases in France



Daily New Cases in Spain

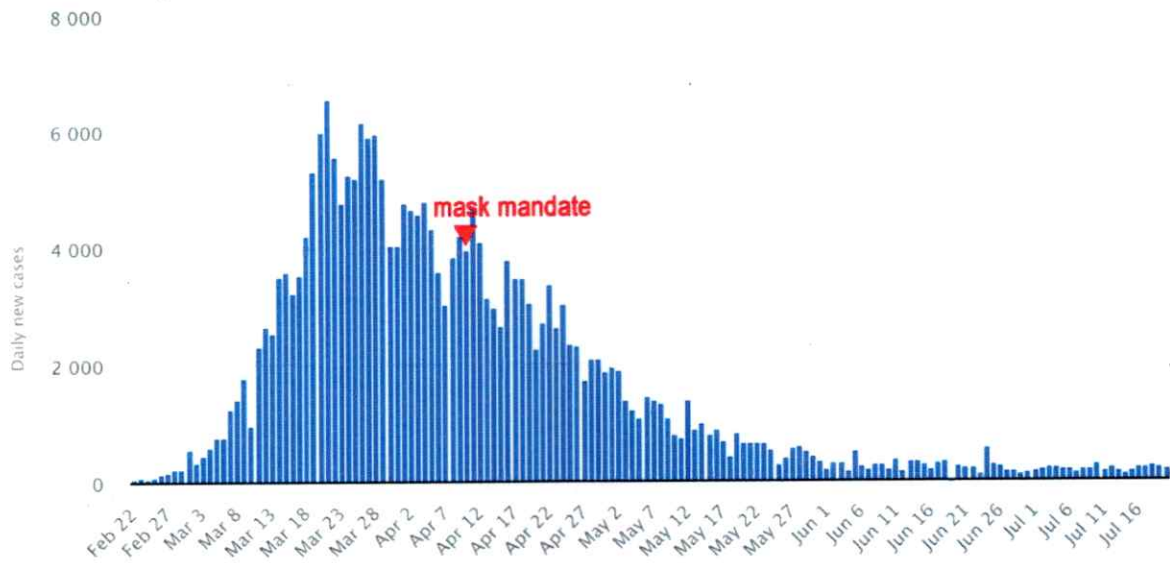


Daily New Cases in India



Italy

Daily new cases



Gloria Sitton

15
9-12-20

From: BARBARA BEACH <bpbeach@aol.com>
Sent: Saturday, September 12, 2020 10:39 AM
To: Gloria Sitton
Subject: [EXTERNAL]Fwd: Docket item 15 Ordinance 21-0210

I am so sorry Ms. Sitton - I sent the below out yesterday and forgot to copy you.

Barbara P. Beach
614 S Royal St
Alexandria, VA 22314
bpbeach@aol.com
703.683.3434

Disclaimer: This message is intended only for the named recipient. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is not allowed.

Please excuse any typos...I am either using a very small keyboard or dictating the message.

Begin forwarded message:

From: BARBARA BEACH <bpbeach@aol.com>
Date: September 11, 2020 at 1:58:24 PM EDT
To: Justin Wilson <justin.wilson@alexandriava.gov>, Vice Mayor Bennett-Parker <elizabeth.bennettparker@alexandriava.gov>, Councilmember Amy Jackson <amy.jackson@alexandriava.gov>, del.pepper@alexandriava.gov, John Chapman <john.taylor.chapman@alexandriava.gov>, Mo Seifeldein <mo.seifeldein@alexandriava.gov>, Council Member Canek Aguirre <canek.aguirre@alexandriava.gov>
Subject: Re: Docket item 15 Ordinance 21-0210

To the Honorable Mayor and Members of City Council:

I live at 614 S. Royal St and I write today to request that you vote in favor of ordinance # 21-0210 that imposes the requirement that masks be worn outdoors in the city when social distancing is not feasible.

I live and work in the old and historic district and walk several times a day, including an hour walk each morning, with my dog.

Every single day I am exposed to someone not wearing a mask in a scenario where social distancing on my part is difficult or not feasible at all. Although I wear a mask, I am left unprotected because they do not wear a mask and that person either cannot or will not socially distant themselves on our sidewalks.

I believe the proposed ordinance will help minimize my exposure to an unsafe environment.

Like all seniors, I am high risk.
Even more significant to me than my high risk status, I have family members who are extremely ill.
Should I catch COVID, it is highly possible that I will never see them again. I do everything I can to stay safe but I need your help.

Many of the sidewalks in my residential area are approximately 4 feet wide. Social distancing is impossible at times on these narrow sidewalks because going into the street is dangerous because of the traffic or the sidewalk edge abuts a structure, prohibiting escape. At times, the cars are parked tightly so there is no easy access to the street.

Many times a person comes up from behind or turns a corner into my path so I have no warning to get a safe distance away.

My neighborhood is high density because of the number of residents and also because many people who do not live here but come here to shop, buy groceries or dine out. It is impossible without masks or social distancing to stop the spread of the virus. Social distancing is not working.

I implore you to enact this ordinance to better protect me and my community. Thank you and please stay well.

With kind regards, I remain

Very truly yours,
Barbara P. Beach

Barbara P. Beach, Esq.
614 S Royal St
Alexandria, VA 22314
bpbeach@aol.com
703.683.3434

Disclaimer: This message is intended only for the named recipient. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is not allowed.

Please excuse any typos...I am either using a very small keyboard or dictating the message.

On Aug 29, 2020, at 11:01 AM, BARBARA BEACH <bpbeach@aol.com> wrote:

I write because I still believe the City should require masks both inside and outside in public.

People misunderstand the current requirement and think being outside does not require a mask period - they do not understand the social distancing component of not needing a mask.

So yet again I ask that you strengthen the City's rules and enforce them on the narrow sidewalks as vigorously as you do at the farmers market. If you decline to strengthen the rules at least see that they are enforced as Arlington has done.

Please stay well.

Thank you.

<https://www.wsj.com/articles/covid-lockdowns-economy-pandemic-recession-business-shutdown-sweden-coronavirus-11598281419>

Barbara P. Beach, Esq.
614 S Royal St
Alexandria, VA 22314
bpbeach@aol.com
703.683.3434

Disclaimer: This message is intended only for the named recipient. If you are not the intended recipient you are notified that disclosing, copying, distributing or taking any action in reliance on the contents of this information is not allowed.

Please excuse any typos...I am either using a very small keyboard or dictating the message.

DISCLAIMER: This message was sent from outside the City of Alexandria email system.
DO NOT CLICK any links or download attachments unless the contents are from a trusted source.

15
9-12-20

Thank you Mayor Wilson, Vice-Mayor Bennett-Parker, and Council members. My name is Kimberly Collins and I have lived in the West End for 8 years. I am also a 16-year military veteran and a lifelong resident of the National Capital Region.

I am before you today, virtually, to urge you to vote against the proposed ordinance that will require wearing of face coverings in indoor and outdoor public spaces. The intensive measures taken throughout Virginia in response to the Coronavirus pandemic were supposed to last two and a half weeks, yet the state of emergency and some related restrictions have been extended and implemented as a "you shall" versus a recommendation. Meanwhile, our hospitals have not been overwhelmed and COVID-19 turns out to be a highly survivable infection among those who have fallen ill.

I have defended and continue to defend this nation and the freedoms and liberties we all enjoy, and I am personally disappointed to witness the societal effects of COVID-19, in terms of the mandatory safety measures, from government induced lockdowns, to being told where to sit and stand, and a general mood of animosity toward other people who are merely going about their business and leaving others alone and have their personal reasons to not use a face covering.

I am not a medical doctor, but in my research on this pandemic, I believe the now common use of face masks is detrimental to human health and immunity; it socially isolates people from one another, and truly compromises public safety due to decreased facial recognition and the inability to view another's facial expressions. Considering issues and concerns I'm hearing discussed during this meeting, I feel the city has more important matters to focus their efforts than policing the public for mask compliance. Now, on behalf of all Alexandria businesses, I'm glad to see that they have been able to reopen and reemploy their staff, but I implore you to let businesses and the people decide for themselves what risks they'll assume and how to mitigate them. In closing, I ask again that you vote against the proposed ordinance to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. Thank you.

Statement of Jeffrey Lopez Against Proposed Ordinance Requiring Face Coverings

Members of the City Council, I am Jeffrey Lopez and I appreciate the opportunity to address you in opposition to the proposed local ordinance requiring face coverings in Alexandria.

I am an attorney and an Adjunct Professor at Georgetown Law, but appear today as an Alexandria resident of more than twenty years. I have never previously addressed the City Council, but do so now because the proposed ordinance will have no effect on public health and may further exacerbate community tensions in a highly politicized environment.

Throughout the COVID crisis, Alexandrians have acted prudently and responsibly in mitigating the risk to themselves and others in the community, with corresponding health outcomes.

After 29 Alexandrians succumbed to COVID-related illnesses between April 8 and May 8.

However, the month over month progress since should be a cause for optimism, not further regulation. Over the past four months, Alexandria fatalities declined to 16 (May 9- June 8), then 12 (June 9-July 8), 3 (July 9-August 8) and most recently 2 (August 9-September 8), with the last recorded death two weeks ago. See Alexandria Department of Health website. This 93% decline in fatalities occurred without the City Council imposing a local mask requirement like that in the proposed ordinance.

This is particularly so because Alexandria continues to be subject to Governor Northam's May 26 Executive Order (and subsequent amendments) regarding face coverings in the Commonwealth. That Order already places significant masking requirements on the public; indeed, it is difficult to understand how the proposed local ordinance will have any public health benefit beyond that flowing from Governor Northam's Order. The preamble to the proposed ordinance makes no attempt to explain why the Governor's current order is not sufficient on the issue.

Alexandrians do not need greater mitigation measures than other Virginians. In fact, since July, Alexandria's COVID test positivity rate has been at least 20% lower than the Commonwealth average. For the current 7 day average, Alexandria's positivity average is 27% lower (5.5% vs. 7.5%). Simply put, Alexandria is doing about as well as possible in slowing the spread of the virus, protecting those most vulnerable, and providing medical care to the afflicted that allows for recovery in more than 99% of cases. There is no medical case for supplementary masking requirements.

But there is a potential social cost to the ordinance. The stress of COVID is creating tension among citizens in our community. As someone who regularly walks the streets of Old Town, Del Ray and Rosemont, I have witnessed several times this mask issue divide neighbors, causing disapproving looks or rude comments to the unmasked, even if they are keeping at least six feet between themselves and others. I fear the passage of this ordinance will lead to tattling phone calls to the City Manager as members of our community inform on their neighbors. That's not the Alexandria that any of us should want for ourselves and our families.

To conclude, the proposed ordinance does not provide any health benefit beyond the current state order. If the Governor rescinds his masking order, the City Council can decide to consider the mask issue at that time. It should not do so now.

I thank you for hearing my views.

I drove through Old Town a couple times and noticed that mask wearing is not adhered to by most people. Walking is not the same as exercising, as far as mask wearing exceptions go. I wear a mask always when outside the home and am able to even exercise with it on. If someone walks on a sidewalk towards me without a mask, shouldn't they yield about 6 to 10 feet away while I maintain my path? Most do not seem to care. I understand that some shop owners are very concerned about their ability to confront shoppers who aren't wearing masks. Where are the Alexandria police officers to support them?

There is no substance to the argument that it's an infringement on civic rights to force mask wearing anymore then it's an infringement on people's rights to prohibit them from smoking around others. During the fifties and sixties more than half of all adult Americans were regular cigarette smokers they smoke cigarettes in their homes in their cars with their children riding in their offices and even if they were pregnant. Smoking is not outlawed and it's not prohibited. People can still smoke cigarettes, it's not a legal but it's an infringement upon others for them to breathe your smoke. Well it's also an infringement upon others during a pandemic for them to be close enough to breed your breath.

Have we evolved into such a weak citizenship that we can't do something that's a much easier ask then asking people to quit smoking and prohibiting them from smoking around other? Laws and ordinances were enacted to prohibit cigarette smoke our fellow citizens. We are simply trying to do the same thing with face coverings, preventing the breath of others from reaching the olfactory senses of their fellow citizens. When it came to cigarette smoking, they were asking people to quit a habit that was difficult to quit and they were asking them to do it permanently. Smoking indoors in public places was prohibited permanently. With mask wearing it's only a temporary ask, probably there's a vaccination that reduces the infection rate to a miniscule amount.

Is it not considered terrorism when an individual knowingly causes fear among a large group of people? No one can deny that, regardless of how people feel about whether Covid-19 is real, or that mask wearing helps, or which way they lean politically that a significant number of Americans citizens are fearful about being around others who aren't wearing masks.

Therefore, those who knowingly put themselves within breathing distance of fellow citizens without a facial covering are knowingly terrorizing a large group of people. There's good reason to argue that they should be dealt with accordingly. At the very least we need a strong presence of enforcement, particularly around our retail environment where employees cannot be expected to practice enforcement. And even on the streets of Alexander where, as a 65-year-old man, caring for a 90-year-old father, I am fit but frightened to walk the dog around the neighborhood with so many school aged children running around, seemingly without distancing guidance from their parents and few wearing a mask. That fear is enhanced when it's apparent that these encounters are likely with others that may not be taking the virus is seriously as I am.

The lack of enforcement across the country on mask wearing is contributing to the continuation of the virus spread. We are just one small city in this big country, but because of the lack of leadership at the highest level, we have no choice but to hope for the best leadership at the local levels to protect our local environment.

15
9-12-20

September 12, 2020

RE: Proposed Face Masks being REQUIRED in Outdoor settings

Alexandria City Council:

The science and physics of viruses inform us that face masks do not stop the COVID virus as the virus structure is WAY too small (100 nanometers or 1/1000 of width of hair) and slips through masks. Most masks stop particles, otherwise known as "droplets" that are in the 3-micron (3000 nanometers) range.

In regard to outdoors, the COVID virus does travel far for if it did, we would all be infected.

In fact, in May of this year the CDC (Link; https://wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/26/5/19-0994_article#tnF2) published the results of 11 randomized trials which showed that masks DID NOT stop the spread of influenza, which of course is a type of virus similar in size to COVID.

We all agree that wearing a mask INDOORS in PUBLIC settings where we COULD be close to someone ill for an EXTENDED period of time, makes sense as masks STOP LARGE DROPLETS.

HOWEVER, regarding being OUTDOORS, those of us who walk, run, and cycle, with emphasis on those of us who run, being forced to wear a mask while exercising would add a barrier that inhibits the ability to breath efficiently AND DOES NOTHING to stop COVID.

If you want to make a PERSONAL DECISION to wear a mask protects you while outdoors, do so though the effects are mostly psychological, not physiological. If you are ill with COVID or with the FLU etc. you should not be ANYWHERE where you could infect others, including being outdoors. In that case you should make the personal decision to STAY HOME AND STAY ISOLATED.

For those of us who are not ill, the outdoors offers comfort via fresh air, extended visual horizons -contrasted with four indoor walls, and exercise. Conversely, being forced to wear a mask OUTDOORS contributes to an overall climate of FEAR without offering any benefit.

Again, if you want to make a personal decision to wear a mask outdoors or while driving, then do so that is your choice. Just do not force me to do the same and DO NOT seek to make us a society of LAW BREAKERS via a scientifically ineffective ordinance.

Tom McCarthy
417 S Lee St
Alexandria, VA 22314

15
9-12-20

Page 1 of 1

I hope you will support the proposed New Face Covering Ordinance. In a civil society, we all ought pay attention to Cedar Dvorin

COMMENTS ON OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED ORDINANCE, DOCKET NO. 15

Dear Council:

I write in opposition to the mask ordinance proposed at Docket No. 15 in the Docket for the City Council Public Hearing to take place September 12, 2020 ("Proposed Ordinance"). The Proposed Ordinance should not pass for the following reasons:

1. Governor Northam, a licensed physician, and State Health Commissioner Norman Oliver, a licensed physician, have seen no reason to impose the type of restrictions and mandates that the Proposed Ordinance contemplates. The City Council should not take actions which supplant the balanced analysis of medical professionals at the state level.
2. What do Arlington County, Richmond, Virginia Beach, Chesapeake, Norfolk, Newport News, Fairfax County, Prince William County, Loudoun County, Chesterfield County, and Henrico County all have in common? They are all larger, in terms of population, than the City of Alexandria, and none of them have imposed the restrictions and mandates that the Proposed Order contemplates. Many of the aforementioned cities/counties have daily new case counts that are equal to, or higher than, those in the City of Alexandria.¹ It is irrational and ill-advised to subject residents to additional requirements when other jurisdictions within the Commonwealth with equivalent or more severe outbreaks have not taken similar actions.
3. The health care system in Alexandria is far from "overrun." There is no need to impose the strictest mask measure in the Commonwealth of Virginia when existing systems are more than adequate to accommodate the small percentage (approx. 9%)² of persons who need hospitalization. There has never been a report of Alexandria health care providers being "overwhelmed" by Covid-19 cases, and the Proposed Ordinance cites no overwhelming surge in hospitalizations as a justification for the strengthened mask mandate.
4. Relatedly, the Proposed Ordinance is another example of moving the goalposts from the original "flatten the curve" goal to "total eradication of a disease." The methods available to humans, short of therapeutics and vaccinations, are crude and imperfect, and will never fully stop a virus from spreading. The existing measures in place are more than sufficient to allow persons who require health care to receive it. Imposing greater, more draconian requirements will only lead to diminishing returns, dissatisfied citizens, and "Covid-19 fatigue."
5. Mayor Wilson has stated on the record that the City does not "envision this as an enforcement effort."³ If the City has no goal or desire to "enforce" the ordinance, then why pass an "enforceable" ordinance in the first place? The City can meet the same goal of educating the public by issuing a resolution recommending the mask-wearing habits included in the Proposed Ordinance, or through other public outreach. Passing ordinances with the intention of *not* enforcing them dilutes the effectiveness of the Proposed Ordinance and other ordinances by causing the public to question which, if any, ordinances the City will enforce and how the City decides whether it will or will not enforce an ordinance.

¹ Data available at <https://www.vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus/coronavirus/covid-19-in-virginia-locality/>.

² <https://www.arha.us/latest-covid-19-coronavirus>

³ <https://wjla.com/news/local/new-proposal-would-expand-face-mask-requirements-in-alexandria>

6. The Council has made no finding, and the Proposed Ordinance presents no evidence, that the supposed rise in infection rate in recent weeks is due to increased outdoor transmission. The “outdoor” portion of the Proposed Ordinance is based on nothing more than an unproven assumption and conjecture.
7. The Proposed Ordinance fails to take into account groups of close friends or family members who, while they may not be in the same household, nonetheless limit their interactions to said friends/family. If two households from the same close-knit family want to have a gathering in a park, they should not be compelled to wear masks around one another.
8. The Proposed Ordinance is too vague to give residents an accurate understanding of its requirements. The definition of “physical distancing” is contingent upon “the activity an individual is engaged in,” and the terms “maintain” and “maintaining” are vague as used in the Proposed Ordinance. Does “maintain” mean that there can be no exceptions to the six-foot rule? What if a person passes another on a sidewalk for no more than a second or two? As an example, the District of Columbia’s Mayor’s Order 2020-080 on Wearing of Masks in the District of Columbia To Prevent the Spread of COVID-19⁴, upon which the Proposed Ordinance is based⁵, indicates that persons need not wear a mask if they are likely to only come in “fleeting” contact with others. The Proposed Ordinance lacks any such nuance, subjecting it to multiple interpretations and making it too vague to be a law.

While there are other bases to oppose the Proposed Ordinance, including political and values-based judgments, the foregoing reasons are apolitical. The reasons for opposing the Proposed Ordinance stated herein involve no balancing of economic, educational, social, political, psychological, or public health considerations; they are based on the text of the law, stated intent of the law, and simple statistics. Other communities in other parts of the nation have undoubtedly avoided mask mandates for political considerations and/or because their leaders balance the needs and wants of the public differently. The comments above allow the Council to set aside such subjective judgments and analyze the Proposed Ordinance on objective grounds.

Please note I do not ask for any time allotment to speak during the Public Hearing on the Proposed Ordinance, so long as these comments are read and considered by the Council. If, however, an oral presentation is required in order to have the foregoing comments considered by the Council, I may be contacted at the telephone number provided with these comments.

Thank you for considering these comments. I am hopeful the Council will reconsider its position with respect to the Proposed Ordinance and choose an action (or inaction) more in line with the needs of the City.

Kind Regards,

Drew T. Dorner

⁴ <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/maskorder>

⁵ See Mayor’s comments at <https://wjla.com/news/local/new-proposal-would-expand-face-mask-requirements-in-alexandria>.

15
9-12-20

September 12, 2020

Mr. Mayor and Ms. Vice Mayor and members of the Council,

Thank you for the opportunity to speak today.

As a 15-year Alexandria resident, and a liberal-leaning person, I'm a bit distressed to hear that the City Council has an outdoor mask Ordinance on the docket for this weekend. I am a proud mask wearer everywhere I go inside and support that wholeheartedly. With the continued decline in numbers in Alexandria, and the overall data that seems to show a lack of spread outdoors, I do not support an outdoor mask wearing Ordinance even if it's only in force when there's 6' or less.

The Ordinance states that we have increasing case counts averaging 20/day but as per the VDH website on September 10th, the counts have been averaged 11 or less over the past 14 days. Not one single day has hit 20. This info is incorrect.

I wear a mask outside when I feel too close to others – like at farmer's markets – but I fear that **REQUIRING** masks outside in all public spaces gets a bit 'big brother-ish' and isn't needed. We need to everyone to be outdoors for as long as possible this fall because we have no idea what the winter will look like. Please do not put another impediment in the way of people getting exercise and spending time outdoors. The data does not support it.

Also, how will someone know if it's 5' or 6'? It's so subjective. Get out a measuring stick? It's so arbitrary and gives room for so much interpretation that I bet it's not enforced anyways and just puts an unnecessary law on the books. What are the plans for enforcement? The Ordinance doesn't say.

I plead with the City Council – please NO mask ordinance. Keep the focus on testing in Arlandria – that is an incredibly GOOD use of resources. I support that wholeheartedly. But please direct resources where they are needed and not toward outdoor masks.

Thank you,
Heidi Parsont

15
9-12-20

To: Alexandria City Government

Re: Comments about ordinance requiring face masks to be discussed at public hearing on
Sept 12, 2020

Why masks now? Is there an upward trending statistic?

I'm concerned that my elected officials are moving goal posts in an arbitrary way without an end goal.

First it was stay home and flatten the curve so that our hospitals are not over run.

Well our hospitals are not over run. The curve is flattened.

Now it seems all we're concerned with is testing for positive cases. Despite the fact that hospitalizations and deaths are down. Many people test positive with zero symptoms.

We have had 2700 deaths in Virginia due to Covid. Horrible. Terrible. Every death is bad. But did you know that in Virginia in 2017, there were 15,000 deaths due to cancer? 3,900 deaths due to accidents?

So many accidents! Should we have stayed home to avoid them. Perhaps we should have.

But then how do we know - as our current situation - when its ok to stop all of these measures? Accidents may happen the minute you leave your house. My car on the road is a possible danger to your car on the road. Do we stay home forever? Do we wear masks forever?

Masks are not a small thing. I've seen workers, sweating in the heat, breathing all day long into those masks. 8 or more hours a day. Are you, city council members, being forced to do the same? Breathing in your own carbon dioxide for 8 hours? The inside of the mask lined with sweat? You all know what I'm talking about. Little children, being forced to wear them. Are they really in danger? Are they a danger to anyone else?

And yes, this move will hurt businesses. I've heard many folks claim they will stay away from Alexandria's shops and restaurants if they are forced to wear mask. Is that good for Alexandria?

So I ask you:

Why masks now?

And also:

How do we know when we can stop wearing masks?

- Is it zero cases? The only way that will happen is if we just stop testing and stop reporting.
- Is it a vaccine? It took 25 years for a chicken pox vaccine to be developed.

- What if December's numbers are the same as September's? Do we stop or keep wearing masks?

Without answers to these questions, our government is using their power arbitrarily and recklessly. You are hurting people. Enough is enough

Sincerely,

Laura Schoppa, 3622 Greenway Pl, Alexandria, VA 22302

571-213-2812