

I'd like to make a couple of remarks about our current situation. I took note of the reaction to Councilman Wilson's remarks and I want to be clear that my comments are my own and may or may not represent the opinion of any other member of council.

I believe that at certain times it is incumbent upon us as elected representatives to offer leadership by expressing our point of view on the issues of the day.

While the vast majority of our fellow citizens have endeavored to comply with mandates coming from the Governor in an effort to flatten the curve to limit the spread of the Covid 19 virus, it has come at a cost.

Obviously those who have become ill and even died are on all of our hearts and minds and we share the grief of their families.

But cost can be measured in many ways. Of course, financial cost is one but delayed medical care is a cost as well. Lost school time is a cost. Depression from isolation and financial hardship is a real cost also. Indeed there are a number of ways we could measure costs. Never the less our fellow citizens have stepped up and cooperated and many have paid a price.

I have often heard the Governor say that he will be “lead by science and the experts”. That phrase never sat well with me but I couldn’t put my finger on it until I discussed it with my son who is completing his PhD in Political Philosophy.

These are his words:

He says,

“ The nature of, politics and especially statesmanship, is such that it cannot outsource its decision making to scientists either of the natural or economic type.

Statesmanship- which is what has failed here in many ways- requires making decisions that take into account but are not reducible to those considerations, because the Statesman is one who has responsibility to care for the whole community, not just one part or aspect.

He continued, saying:

There are often legitimate ends that are in tension with one another in the actual functioning of political communities. In this case, the legitimate end of economic productivity and ensuring that people are able to participate in the inherent dignity that work supplies versus ensuring physical health to the greatest extent possible.

But these ends and many others are of course always in tension and the task of the Statesman is always to balance these tensions with an eye toward the common good, which is distinct from the aggregation of individual goods.

His words clarified for me what was unsettling to me about the governor's statement.

It is vital that the Governor as the chief executive caretaker of the state be mindful of the *entire* state in *all* of its aspects' - both the citizens most at risk of the virus *and* all the other members of the state as well.

It is paramount that the Governor not outsource decision making to those trained only to look at issues associated with their own discipline.

The Governor must also be mindful of the precedents that may be established here with the lack of checks and balances in the decision-making process. For nearly two months now, our General Assembly has been out of session. Our courts have also been closed. This scenario is very troubling as the Governor seems to be ruling by fiat with an indefinite timeline. I do not believe the citizens will tolerate this for long – nor should they.

A few days ago I received a letter from a small businessman pleading to be allowed to reopen his business which is on the brink of destruction before they fell into bankruptcy and lost everything he and his wife had worked for over his 50 years. He had a compelling case and concluded saying, "I humbly ask for special permission to have this request granted".

I was taken aback and heartbroken. Is this the United States of America?

Does a citizen have to humbly petition the Governor to exercise his God given rights”

Where has our common sense gone?

What have we been fighting to defend with the blood of patriots over many Wars? I wish it were within my ability to grant that request because I would. Poverty also destroys lives.

The people of Delaware are intelligent and willing to do what is right to assist in limiting the spread of this virus. Those most at risk know what they must do to limit their exposure and should act accordingly. Our citizens gave two weeks willingly in order to “flatten the curve”. They gave another month because they were asked. But as the shutdown grinds on – approaching two months now- it becomes less clear what the purpose is. Since we have achieved the stated goal of flattening the curve we, as elected officials charged with ensuring the good of our country and its citizens, should demand that businesses which can reopen safely should be allowed to do so – without fear of retribution.

There must be accountability to ensure that this crisis does not become worse than the disease, by allowing drastic collateral damage to more people than are actually touched by the virus or by undermining the rule of law.

Caution is always advisable when implementing policy but acting “out of an abundance of caution” is not a sustainable governing principal – especially when there are very real trade offs at stake.

Abdicating decision making to the scientists or specialist is not a substitute for the good judgement of the Stateman. While we should be open to advice from science, it is past time to have the input of the General Assembly and the Courts.

Thank you.