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Maury County Government

Andy Ogles, County Mayor

Room 101
Maury County Courthouse
Columbia, Tennessee 38401

June 3, 2020

VIA U.S. MAIL AND EMAIL (Bill.Lee@tn.gov):

The Honorable Governor Bill Lee
State Capital, 1st Floor
600 Dr. Martin L. King, Jr. Blvd.
Nashville, TN 37243

RE: Elimination of remaining COVID-19 executive orders for Maury County

Dear Governor Lee:

I hope this letter finds you well in what I know have been very difficult circumstances for all.

The purpose of this letter is to formally ask you to cease all remaining restrictions created by your executive orders as relating to Maury County. Simply put, we believe that continued social distancing mandates are serving as a damper on our economic recovery, slowing down what should by all measures be a robust return to normal. In short, their continued presence, with all due respect, are doing more harm than good.

I know you agree that Maury County has done its part to “flatten the curve”. Our numbers have born that out. To date, we have had only 102 cases in Maury County, a community of about 100,000 -- with no fatalities. Furthermore, we have a regional hospital that serves a multi-county region comprising of nine counties -- and yet we have had very few cases admitted to our hospital. So, very clearly, the facts support that we have reached a new stage in this pandemic, one where the people can make their own decisions as to how best to defend against the resurgence of this illness. The one-size-fits-all approach that might have been necessary in the early stages should give-way to local, if not individual control.

I am sure you also agree that the optics of the approach to the shutdown and social distancing have not always seemed logical to the average citizen. For example, Mayor Cooper of Nashville recently encouraged a large-scale protest in Nashville, a city that has seen its economy destroyed by the shutdown. No citizen watching the video footage of this event would believe that Nashville was concerned about social distancing in those moments. Further, there was silence, at

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least from the media, in terms of any response from the State of Tennessee as to the possible complications from permitting such mass protests and the closeness of contact that necessarily comes with such an event. So, if a protest of thousands of persons is permitted in an area considered a Tennessee hot-spot for COVID-19, why cannot Maury County, with a tiny fraction of the numbers seen in Davidson County, be released to govern itself? For me, it is really about who is trusted to deal with this: The people of a community or a centralized government. In our case, I have no choice but to side with the former, the people of Maury County.

Governor Lee, eliminating your executive orders as pertaining to our community does not mean Maury County citizens are at increased risk. Quite frankly, by helping us recover economically and to mentally put this crisis behind us, we are better off. I strongly believe this -- and so do thousands of my fellow Maury Countians.

I look forward to your swift response and release of those remaining restrictions if not for ALL of Tennessee, certainly Maury County.

Sincerely yours,



Andrew Ogles,
Mayor, Maury County

AO:sjw