

RESOLUTION OPPOSING PREMATURE LIFTING OF PHYSICAL DISTANCING MEASURES AND URGING THE ADOPTION OF BUSINESS POLICIES TO LIMIT THE SPREAD OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC UNTIL A REASONABLE DEGREE OF PUBLIC HEALTH PROTECTION CAN BE ENSURED

By Council President Brenda Jones and Council Member Roy McCalister Jr.

WHEREAS, In the face of the historically unprecedented Covid-19 novel coronavirus global pandemic, during the months of March and April 2020, millions of Americans dispersed from workplaces, schools, houses of worship, restaurants, bars, concert halls, sports stadia and other places where people congregate in public, practicing stringent and comprehensive physical distancing measures that have apparently spared the country even worse contagion and death as a result of this virus and the evident inability of the federal government or the U.S. health care system to cope with an intertwined public health and socioeconomic crisis of this magnitude; and

WHEREAS, Notwithstanding the incredible sacrifices and promising results to date of the broad physical distancing measures:

- 1) The loss of health, life, prosperity and value in the pandemic has already been huge;
- 2) Detroit has been one of the communities hardest hit; and
- 3) Some irresponsible, public leaders have been arguing without any significant supporting evidence that Americans should stop or at least drastically limit these successful public health protections in the interest of “reopening” the economy, sending people back to inherently dangerous and unhealthy spaces for work, school, worship and commerce before the virus is adequately controlled; and

WHEREAS, the Detroit City Council vigorously and adamantly opposes any premature lifting of physical distancing measures unless and until the proponents of such regression to mass exposures can prove that it will not adversely affect public health; and

WHEREAS, the burden of demonstrating that ending physical distancing precautions would unreasonably harm public health, perhaps leading to a “second wave” of uncontrolled contagion and many more deaths, should not be placed on advocates of public health who oppose ending the current comprehensive, common sense restrictions on public assemblies; and

WHEREAS, Covid-19 has to date taken an extremely painful toll in the African American community, with a vastly disproportionate amount of coronavirus deaths in Michigan so far reportedly suffered by African Americans. Although making up only approximately 14% of the State of Michigan’s population, African Americans so far account for 33% of the coronavirus cases in the state, and 40% of the deaths; and

WHEREAS, the extreme racial disparity in Covid-19 cases and deaths among African Americans must be taken into consideration when considering the removal of the common sense physical distancing measures and state requirements that appear at this time to be working impressively to reduce the pandemic’s spread; and

WHEREAS, since none of the above conditions can currently be met, significantly easing or lifting the current measures in place for physical distancing to slow the spread of the pandemic at this time would be premature and would unreasonably risk even more severe damage to our country, state and city; and

WHEREAS, as the federal, state and local governments gradually increase their capacities to deal with this crisis, and additional data about the dimension of contagion and the incidence of death becomes available, there will be further opportunities in the future to responsibly and intelligently assess risk, gradually increase the size and frequency of social gatherings, and aggressively monitor and treat any further spikes in the transmission of Covid-19;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council opposes premature limitation or lifting of physical distancing measures adopted in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic, unless and until the following conditions can be conclusively shown to be in place:

- 1) mass testing of millions of Americans per day to identify those who are infected;
- 2) comprehensive contact tracing based on any and all future diagnoses, to isolate other people who may have been infected; and
- 3) availability of sufficient personal protective equipment (PPE) to shield frontline health care workers from the risks of contagion in the course of treating any flare-ups in the pandemic after easing physical distancing; and
- 4) sufficient capacity of Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds, mechanical respirators and other hospital medical space and equipment to adequately treat the foreseeable surge in need for care; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council will work with Detroit Mayor Mike Duggan, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer and others to continue the practices of physical distancing and suspension of ordinary social, economic, business and entertainment gatherings, at least until the necessary conditions of adequate mass testing, contact tracing, protective equipment for frontline health workers, and adequate hospital and ICU resources are in place to protect public health; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Detroit City Council urges businesses across the City of Detroit to adopt the following policies:

- 1) Mandating wearing masks when employees and customers have the propensity to be within 6 feet of another individual.
- 2) Adopt procedures to meet the environmental cleaning guidelines set by the CDC, including by cleaning and disinfecting frequent touchpoints throughout the day such as point of sale terminals at registers, shopping carts, and shopping baskets.
- 3) Prohibit employees who are sick from reporting to work and send employees home if they display symptoms of COVID-19.
- 4) Allocation of at least two hours a week of shopping time for vulnerable populations.
- 5) If an employee tests positive for COVID-19, establishments must notify other employees without infringing on a worker's private personal-health related information.

- 6) Require checkout employees or those handling food to wear some form of covering over their nose and mouth, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief.
- 7) Require all food handlers at restaurants to wear some form of covering over their nose and mouth, such as a homemade mask, scarf, bandana, or handkerchief.
- 8) Accommodate employees who fall within a vulnerable population by providing lower-exposure work assignments or giving them the option to take an unpaid leave of absence with a return date coinciding with the end of the states of emergency and disaster.
- 9) Develop and implement a daily screening program, as described herein, for all staff upon or just prior to reporting to work sites.

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that copies of this resolution shall be provided to Mayor Duggan, Governor Whitmer, mass media, City of Detroit residents and others in an attempt to clarify the life and death issues at stake in the decisions to be made in the near future about maintaining physical distancing measures, or “re-opening” the economy, in the face of the Covid-19 pandemic.