

## Hypocrisy and overreach deserve civil disobedience

Michiganders by the thousands took to the streets today to protest their governor's overreaching policies in light of the Coronavirus crisis in that state. Protestors encircled the state capitol in Lansing in their cars, giving new meaning to the phrase, 'social distancing.' It was only fitting that they used their cars to do so as Michigan is home to the automotive industry which is suffering, mightily. Wait. Before you get the idea that these were a bunch of rabid Conservatives who were just out to discredit their Democrat governor, think again. Oh, and if you believe the Governor's propaganda that the protests were financed by the DeVoss family, think again, there too. A spokesperson for the DeVoss family, Nick Wasmiller, said the family "hasn't spent a dime on this protest, nor has it offered prior support to the organizing entity" (but) "understands the frustration of fellow Michiganders as elements of the governor's top-down approach appear to go beyond public safety."

The protestors were comprised of hundreds of small businesspeople as well as ordinary out-of-work citizens who decided to push back at Governor Whitmer's latest edict from her palace in Lansing. In case you weren't aware of the Draconian executive orders regarding social distancing and essential/non-essential businesses she has enacted, here are some of them...

Michiganders won't be allowed to travel to their own in-state vacation residences. They are not permitted to use a motor boat (but are free to take to canoes or sailboats). They may not come together, even as families. Marijuana dispensaries and abortion clinics are open for business as is the state's lottery, but 'big box' stores must close areas "dedicated to carpeting, flooring, furniture, garden centers, plant nurseries, or paint," among other measures. Landscapers are not allowed to mow customers' lawns and golfers are banned from golf courses (so much for exercise). Violators could be fined or charged with a misdemeanor. Civil fines of up to \$1,000 may be levied for breaking Whitmer's social distancing edicts.

The Governor says that all these measures are justifiable and that they are for the *public's safety*, but hundreds of thousands of her subjects disagree. If Whitmer's regime were the only one abusing her power one might think this was a 'one-off.' It's not. Right here in New Mexico we have our own governor with a 'Napolean complex.' On Easter Saturday, Governor Grisham dropped the hammer on New Mexico's religious community, effectively banning the gathering of religious practitioners. That was the last straw for many who had given the Governor a passing grade for many of her previous social distancing executive orders.

The average citizen understands the need for instituting protective measures to limit the spread of the Coronavirus, but there seems to be no reasonable justification for taking away people's right to worship just as there seems to be no logic for identifying some businesses as 'essential' while others are deemed 'non-essential.' Neither is there any reason why many of our State workers are still on the job and haven't been furloughed. Could it be because they represent a largely Democratic Party voting block?

That aspersion aside, this prolonged severely reduced business environment will shortly, I predict, usher in a new age of civil disobedience. I'm not suggesting that we'll see burning effigies of the Governor on The Plaza in Santa Fe, but I am suggesting that many of us have reached the end of our tether. We're tired of witnessing a wholesale power grab by bureaucrats with agendas that are not grounded solely in 'protecting the populace.' As I mentioned in a previous article, in times of crisis power vacuums open up and are quickly filled by politicians who long for single-party domination. One recent event/issue is reflective of that. I'm speaking of the Democrats' push to change the policy of in-person voting to a 100% mail-in vote.

Luckily, the New Mexico Supreme Court just rejected this attempt to end-run the system and instructed the Secretary of State to issue absentee ballot applications to all registered voters and upheld the status quo of requiring either an absentee ballot or an in-person vote to be cast.

Given the possibility of voter fraud through 'ballot harvesting' whereby anybody could gather mail-in ballots from senior citizens or impressionable groups and *persuade* them to cast their ballots for the harvester's party, it's fortunate that the court blocked this blatant attempt to 'organize' a victory for the home team.

Locking down the business sector, forcing companies to furlough workers because of ideological preferences such as opposition to the Second Amendment or, conversely, having preferences for legalized marijuana, criminal sentence forgiveness or being pro-abortion must not stand. The nation's governors are not monarchs nor should they be allowed to dictate which kinds of businesses they like and which ones they don't. Neither should they be allowed to remake our social structure into a politically advantageous one for their own party.

America's history of civil disobedience is a long and proud one, though usually reserved for policies emanating from the Federal Government. This time it's the states that are under fire and rightly so. If we continue to let power-hungry chief executives in state governments have their way with us, then we will have only ourselves to blame. The ballot box isn't the only arena. The streets are another. This could be a long and uncomfortable spring and summer.

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