

OPINION



PILOT EDITORIAL

If government can close one business, it can close others

On Monday evening, the governor of Minnesota ordered bars, restaurants and other places of public amusement, including theaters, bowling alleys and fitness centers, to close, and declared it a criminal offense if they refuse to comply.

In other words, the government is forcing privately owned businesses to cease operations under penalty of law.

Many of these businesses — especially in our neck of the woods — are mom-and-pop shops, owned and operated by hardworking, taxpaying citizens. For many of these folks, these businesses are their primary — perhaps only — source of income.

And now the government — their government, our government — has taken that away from them.

Yes, this unprecedented action has been taken in light of unprecedented circumstances. But now, because we are allowing it to happen, such action is no longer unprecedented.

What is keeping the governor — or any other head or branch of government — from ordering other private businesses to close? A world in which the government can declare a “state of emergency” over any trivial — even ideologically driven — issue and start closing businesses on a whim is not that far away.

What about a business owned by a political opponent, or one owned by a competing business interest?

What about a business offering a legal good or service to which those in power object?

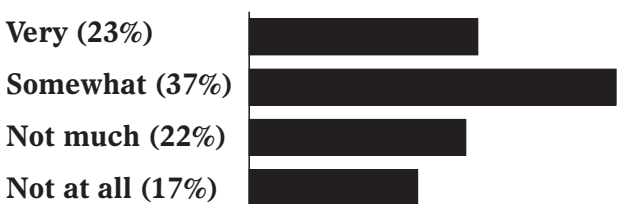
What about a business, like the Jackson County Pilot, calling into public question the propriety of the government shutting down private business?

If the government can put the bar down the street out of business, it can certainly do the same for any other business, including the free and open press.

Are we ready to allow the government a free pass to do this? If so, let’s sit in our houses and say nothing. If not, let’s do something about it — government-mandated social distancing or not.

LAST WEEK’S ONLINE POLL

Q: How concerned are you about the novel coronavirus?



Source: Jackson County Pilot Website

THIS WEEK’S ONLINE POLL

Q: What do you think about precautions being taken to slow the spread of COVID-19?

Vote online at jacksoncountypilot.com.

What’s the deal with those blue headlights?

Question: Are the blue, or Xenon, headlamps legal in Minnesota?

Answer: Xenon or high-intensity discharge headlights are legal if they comply with the same federal motor vehicle safety standard requirements as halogen and incandescent headlamps.

Minnesota Statutes Chapter 169.468 requires the commissioner to adopt vehicle safety rules in substantial conformance with federal motor vehicle safety standards for any new vehicle, or for any new item of motor vehicle equipment. These standards are contained in 49 CFR Part 571.

If the vehicle has not been altered since the time of purchase from a dealer, it is almost certain

the lights are legal, as the manufacturer and dealer would need to follow federal guidelines.

The aftermarket use of Xenon lights may pose a more difficult problem. Most aftermarket systems comply with SAE and federal standards; however, some “lookalike” systems are not. The vehicle lighting system in question would need to be inspected by a reputable mechanic. The bulbs should contain the proper markings to permit the lighting device to be traced back to the appropriate SAE standard. If they are not in compliance, a citation may be issued.

If someone wants to convert a vehicle to Xenon HID, he or she must purchase new Xenon

HID headlamps. HID systems designed for halogen lights produce substantially different beam patterns.

It is an important time of year to remind motorists the law states you must turn on your headlights during harsh weather, rain, snow, fog or anytime there is low visibility. This will help ensure other motorists can see you. Do not to rely on your daytime running lights alone, as your taillights will not be working, thus making your vehicle difficult to see.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you simply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. If you have any

questions concerning traffic-related laws or issues in Minnesota, send your questions to Sgt. Troy Christianson, Minnesota State Patrol, at 2900 48th St. NW; Rochester, MN 55901-5848. Or reach him at Troy.Christianson@state.mn.us.



ASK A TROOPER
Sgt. Troy Christianson

FACEBOOK

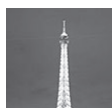
A PILOT EDITORIAL: If government can close one business, it can close others.



KATHY SNYDER FREDERICK um can I say a taste of socialism. I understand the why, but it should be left up to the individual businesses if they want to follow the governor's recommendation.



JILL LEEN The governor is doing the right thing. This is not a political ploy this is the real deal! The ability of the government to close businesses during time of emergency has always been there. They didnt do this for shits and giggles. If this spreads like it did in Italy we will not have the medical means to take care of everyone. If the spread of the virus can be slowed down then hopefully our medical community can keep up. For 80% of us we will be fine but for 20% it could mean life or death.



CATHY STRUBE BUXENGARD Cathy Strube Buxengard Our governor is listening to the health professionals. Saving lives is his main concern. This is not a political problem it is a public health problem. Don't start conspiracy theories.



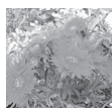
ANGELA HAMLETT Yes. I support our Governor in his decision. I will also support these business owners that offer limited services during this time.



TAMMY ARMSTRONG In this case, as a small business owner, I am in favor. The alternative is too frightening to think about. Doing as asked helps to keep my own family members healthy not just everyone else. We are stuck in a hard position.



MARY BEZDICEK I totally agree with Governor Walz. He wouldn't had to do this if people would have listened & stayed home. #flattenthecurve



SANDY THIEL A touch of Bernie's socialism.



AARON BENSON Sandy Thiel you realize that Donald Trump is the current president. You realize your statement literally makes no sense. This is a taste of the trump presidency if anything. Ffs I don't even think you know what socialism is.



CHUCK RINGKOB Slippery Slope! Freedom of assembly is a right guaranteed in the Constitution. Infectious diseases have been around since the beginning of time, ask yourself, why is this one being treated so differently?



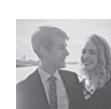
SANDY THIEL Sandy Thiel I agree. My daughter ordered to close her business near Moorhead at 5 PM today. It is her only source of income. Sad.



SAMANTHA WENDT Shut bars and businesses down or kill more people with staying open.....it is tough choices right now



CARMEN JOHNSON But then he closed schools but then forced them to provide daycare and food for all Students. Which then puts people together in large groups and students back together. I don't get it. Close everything down



JORDAN CUSHMAN Individuals had the choice to practice basic hygiene, limit travel, and the ability to recognize what was being taken seriously on a global level far before COVID-19 spread to the Midwest. Collectively, we chose not to and are now dealing with the consequences. I applaud Tim Walz and the leadership of other states who have implemented similar measures. They are literally saving lives, and preventing an overflow of our limited healthcare system. I do still hope to see relief packages put together for small businesses primarily in the coming weeks. If we can't trust our government to look out for our interests during a crisis, then we can't trust them at all.

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HOW LOW WILL IT GO?

The price of gasoline is falling in the wake of market turmoil spurred on by the threat of the COVID-19 virus, but likely won't go as low as it was in Jackson back in 1943.

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— OPINIONS —

The Jackson County Pilot welcomes letters to the editor. Letters must include the writer's name, as well as address and phone number for verification purposes. Letters should be brief, up to 300 words. The editor reserves the right to determine whether material submitted for publication shall be printed and the right to edit as needed. Submit letters in person at the Jackson County Pilot office, mail them to 310 Second St. in Jackson or email them to editor@livewireprinting.com The deadline for letters is Monday noon. All submissions become the property of the Jackson County Pilot and may be published or otherwise used in any medium.

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