



My name is Ryan Kirchoff, and I am the Vice-President of Burtis Motor Co. in Garden City. We are a Ford dealer with over 100 years serving our area. Luckily, we have been able to remain open, and have not been affected like those forced to close, and I write in support of those businesses today. Those businesses have had their right to provide stripped, returned, and stripped again by a Governor with far too much power to dictate what the citizenry can and cannot do.

Those "un-essential" businesses, as if there is such a thing, have been closed for over 2 months. At the whims of one person, small businesses closed, while big box stores were allowed to remain open. It is un-American to have one person choose winners and losers. It is un-American to let 900 people in a big box store, while small businesses are closed. Large venues that can practice distancing remain closed and children's summer sports are un-available, while we can stand in line with people at home improvement stores, every single day. This is not a monarchy, but it sure feels like we are being ruled over by one.

The phased re-opening plan for Kansas was to be based on hospitalizations and deaths to move between phases. The KDHE data shows neither have spiked in the past 2 weeks. Per KDHE's website Saturday, we have had 7286 cases, or .0025124% of the population of Kansas' 2.9 million citizens. We have had 172 deaths, or .000059% of the citizenry. The number of new cases table on KDHE's website clearly shows a downward trend in new cases, and ER visits for Covid-like illnesses has followed the same trend as 2018, per KDHE. But our ruler in Topeka decided to create a phase out of thin air, and create further uncertainty for our state. Our Governor decided to ignore the data she chose as benchmarks, to continue through her phases. She allowed "supposed" hotbeds for the virus, like salons, barber shops and fitness centers to re-open, while others were forced to remain closed for another 2 weeks or longer, dependant on her ongoing decisions, regardless of sanitation and distancing protocols being met. This is not a dictatorship, but it sure feels like Kansas has become one.

It is time to open our state. Every state around us is opening at a faster rate than Kansas. 3 out of the 4 surrounding states have more cases than Kansas, and 3 out of 4 states have more deaths. Why must we lag behind, instead of choosing to lead? Why can we not choose to allocate all of the states resources to protect retirement homes, prisons and meat packing plants? Why not help places with the most need, instead of forcing everyone to suffer? Why can't this process be open? Is it because we won't like what we see? Our nation, and state, was founded on the idea that its people have freedom of choice. The idea that we could be part of the solution to our problems. It was founded to give people a voice, and not be ruled over by one person. It is time to give people their liberties back, and let us choose if we want to stay home, or choose to participate in sports, leisure, movies and restaurants. It is time to give people their rights back, and take power away from Governor Kelly.

Sincerely,

Ryan Kirchoff

Vice President, Burtis Motor Co. Inc.