

## COVID, Chaos and Coercion

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In times of chaos, there are two major dangers: Anarchy and Totalitarianism. The government can either abandon the streets to lawlessness and looting or the government itself can impose soul-choking regulations. Both must be avoided.

When COVID-19 began to dominate the channel-news, CHP was among those calling for preemptive action—early in 2020. On Feb. 25, we asked if Canada was doing enough to protect its citizens from incoming infection.<sup>1</sup> Brian Lilley had already urged border closures in late January, but our PM did not enact restrictions on flights from China until March 16.<sup>2</sup> Time and lives were lost while the PM pursued his vanity project, seeking—but failing to acquire—a seat on the UN Security Council.

There was much we did not know then about the virus: where it came from, how it spread and whom did it affect. In both the US and Canada, there were tragic numbers of deaths in nursing homes before it became public knowledge that the virus was dramatically harder on the elderly than on young people. In Canada, nursing home deaths, amounting to 81% of all COVID deaths, provided stark evidence of the failure to accurately assess and respond quickly to this disease.<sup>3</sup> In nursing home deaths, Canada was worst in the world.<sup>4</sup>

Of course, deaths from the disease are only part of the toll. In nursing homes, deaths from loneliness and neglect have also increased. To make up for initial laxity in preventing contact with infected persons, most jurisdictions have now imposed sweeping restrictions on visitors. In many cases, family members have not been able to visit, encourage or care for their aging loved as they once did during normal times. The tragedy of not being able to be with loved ones and to provide guidance, comfort and hope has taken its toll. Adding insult to injury, family members have not been able to assemble for mutual comfort during and after the death of a loved one, further undermining family ties.

Children, on the other hand, have been impacted very little by the disease itself. Worldwide, less than 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1% of children testing positive have died.<sup>5</sup> Every death is a tragedy, but in terms of statistics, that is an incredibly high recovery rate. Concerns persist about children being carriers to more vulnerable family members, but in terms of risk to each other, COVID-19 can be ruled a non-factor.

But children have still been affected by the impacts of COVID. From the first impressions a newborn baby might receive of its parents and caregivers to the development of social interaction in young children and teenagers, meeting people for the first time without the benefit of seeing the genuine smile behind the mask may hinder them in their emotional growth. In fact, why smile yourself if nobody will see it? The eyes are the window of the soul, but the actions of the lips also convey emotion. Seeing the lips of adults move is part of learning language.<sup>6</sup> And speaking of learning, the closing of schools and playgrounds has profoundly affected children, as has the increased reliance on, and time spent in, online activities.

Although we have deep concerns with some of the curriculum and world view content offered by the public school systems in recent years, our societal norm before COVID was that of parents working away from home during the day while their children spend the day in the classroom, and many families are eager to return to that pattern. Now however, some teachers' unions are resisting a return to classroom routines, citing safety concerns.<sup>7</sup> It's certainly true that teachers are at greater risk than children, and the older they are, the greater the risk. However, demands for masking all the students and reducing class sizes may be either impractical or ineffective. It would be better to establish age brackets to protect older teachers and to allow other concerned teachers to take unpaid leave-of-absence. Keeping all teachers on the payroll without accomplishing the task for which they are paid is simply not going to work.

And that's just the point. We are at a stage in this confusing crisis where governments—desperate to show some kind of progress in the return to normalcy—are being battered by demands from stakeholders and are responding in ways that are not always helpful but are meant to show that they are taking the threat seriously. In the early stages, it was ensuring that masks, gloves and ventilators were available. Then it was shutting down schools, businesses and travel. Then it was fast-tracking the development of a vaccine. In their mad rush to “do something”, sometimes the unintended consequences have done more harm than the benefit gained by a particular action. With the closure of businesses, bankruptcies, suicides, and domestic violence are all up.<sup>8</sup>

And that's not the worst of our problems; well-meaning elected officials and bureaucrats, zealous to measure up to the demands of some and the fears of others, have implemented a haphazard array of restrictive regulations that range from the draconian to the absurd. Michigan's Governor Whitmer forbade the sale of garden tools and seeds at a time when families were at home and wanting to be doing something productive in their own backyards. People have been fined for walking a dog without a mask (the person, not the dog). In Calgary, a street preacher who routinely feeds the homeless on the city street was fined \$1200 (later cleared of wrongdoing).<sup>9</sup> A woman in Australia was arrested for posting to social media an invitation to a lockdown protest.<sup>10</sup> Churches have been operating under a variety of restrictions, some forbidden to meet at all, others only under strict conditions.

Meanwhile, known violent socialist groups such as Antifa and Black Lives Matter have perpetrated brutality, arson, murder, and mayhem in major cities in the US; they have met only anemic responses from local mayors and governors. The political reasons for action or inaction are painfully plain to see. One wonders how many of the activist agitators are living on some form of COVID subsidy from the very governments they are attacking. Canada has not been hit as hard (yet), but in a recent protest in Montreal a statue of our first Prime Minister, Sir John A. MacDonald, was toppled and beheaded. The fury of the mob may manifest itself at any time with little resistance from law enforcement and the politicians who direct them. In fact, back in February, Canada's rail lines were blockaded for weeks without repercussions. And that was when COVID was just a blip on the radar.

As free Canadian citizens, we are to be models of citizenship, exercising our freedoms of speech, religion and assembly, showing due respect for legitimate government efforts and reminding our representatives of their constitutional limitations. The CHP opposes efforts to compel citizens to act against their own best interests. An example would be mandatory vaccinations, the imposition of which would violate personal sovereignty. We stand with those who choose to meet and worship together and to perform works of charity, such as feeding the poor. To join us in our efforts to maintain our human dignity and freedom, visit us at [CHP.ca](http://CHP.ca).

## **Footnotes**

- <sup>1</sup> [www.chp.ca/commentary/coronavirus-is-canada-doing-enough](http://www.chp.ca/commentary/coronavirus-is-canada-doing-enough)
- <sup>2</sup> [torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/lilley-trudeau-shuts-our-borders-too-late](http://torontosun.com/opinion/columnists/lilley-trudeau-shuts-our-borders-too-late)
- <sup>3</sup> [alexschadenberg.blogspot.com/2020/06/81-of-canadian-covid-19-deaths-were.html](http://alexschadenberg.blogspot.com/2020/06/81-of-canadian-covid-19-deaths-were.html)
- <sup>4</sup> [s3.amazonaws.com/chartprod/3WyFL3idpeFFsar75/thumbnail.png](https://s3.amazonaws.com/chartprod/3WyFL3idpeFFsar75/thumbnail.png)
- <sup>5</sup> [www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-age-sex-demographics/](http://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/coronavirus-age-sex-demographics/)
- <sup>6</sup> [time.com/5840192/mask-smiling-coronavirus/](http://time.com/5840192/mask-smiling-coronavirus/)
- <sup>7</sup> [globalnews.ca/news/7307704/ontarios-teachers-unions-covid-10-school-reopen/](http://globalnews.ca/news/7307704/ontarios-teachers-unions-covid-10-school-reopen/)
- <sup>8</sup> [www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/04/13/shutdown\\_could\\_kill\\_more\\_americans\\_than\\_covid-19\\_142934.html](http://www.realclearpolitics.com/articles/2020/04/13/shutdown_could_kill_more_americans_than_covid-19_142934.html)
- <sup>9</sup> [www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/calgary-police-fine-street-preacher-for-violating-covid-19-health-orders/ar-BB12m9cx](http://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/calgary-police-fine-street-preacher-for-violating-covid-19-health-orders/ar-BB12m9cx)
- <sup>10</sup> [www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/calgary-police-fine-street-preacher-for-violating-covid-19-health-orders/ar-BB12m9cx](http://www.msn.com/en-ca/news/canada/calgary-police-fine-street-preacher-for-violating-covid-19-health-orders/ar-BB12m9cx)

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