



# **Opinion: Democratic Party Chair: Prenzler's Plan for Opening Madison County Puts Small Businesses at Risk**

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**EDWARDSVILLE** – In response to the resolution drafted by Madison County Board Chairman Kurt Prenzler that would dangerously encourage small businesses to open their doors without insurance or liability coverage, local leaders are speaking out in

opposition to the reckless lack of detail and clearly political motives of this dangerous plan.

“We all understand that there must be a plan in place to help reopen Madison County, and to help save small businesses, retailers and manufacturers, but this plan would ultimately endanger those same small businesses across our county,” said Randy Harris. “Item 7 in the Resolution clearly shows Prenzler knows that small businesses may not be insured, may put their business licenses in a risky position, and he’s trying to avoid any legal liability for the county, while still encouraging businesses to open. This is politics, plain and simple.”

“This reckless plan put forward by Kurt Prenzler, is entirely a political move intended to draw attention away from the ongoing lawsuits by members of his administration. It is no coincidence this “plan” was floated the day after the two former members of his administration sued the county following their termination over a massive political spying scandal. Businesses are hurting, Prenzler needs to show real leadership and work with our other elected officials to get our county reopened. I beg of Chairman Prenzler to stop playing politics with people’s livelihoods and safety. The situation we find ourselves, requires real leadership, not merely something to use for political gain. Chairman Prenzler’s singular focus on “opening-up” is not only foolish, but dangerous to the many small businesses who will believe this gives them the green light and legal cover to reopen.”

Prenzler released a two-page document late Monday night as a way to “reopen” Madison County that details the economic damage caused by COVID-19, but fails to address the legal ability for small businesses to actually open their doors. The plan also encourages businesses throughout the county to open, but specifically says, “*The adoption of this resolution makes no comment or opinion on the insurability or licensure of any individual or business for operating in a manner inconsistent with any executive order or state statute.*”

Democrats are not the only ones who think violating the State Order is risky, according to Rich Miller of *Capitol Fax*, “The Illinois Retail Merchants Association has taken the position from the beginning that the executive order is ‘the best course of action for both consumers and employees,’ the group’s president, Rob Karr, said via written statement. ‘We have also advised retailers of both the liability, insurance and other legal issues that may arise from not following the state’s guidance.’

The Illinois Restaurant Association also released a statement saying the group has encouraged its members to follow the executive order. The Illinois Licensed Beverage Association, which represents tavern owners, said it ‘does not advise’ its members to violate the executive order.”

**- Submitted by Randy Harris**

**Madison County Democratic Party Chair**