



# Letter to the Editor: County Republicans Express Disappointment in Democrats Politicizing the Reopening of Business

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EDWARDSVILLE - The Madison County Board voted 26-2 on Tuesday to approve a resolution to allow businesses to reopen safely and responsibly under certain guidelines. The resolution was completed by a bi-partisan committee of 4 Republicans and 3 Democrats, with council through the entire process from the State's Attorney Tom Gibbons, a Democrat and two of his assistant state's attorneys.

This didn't stop new Madison County Democrat Party Chairman Randy Harris from blasting the plan as "political", "dangerous" and "reckless" in a Tuesday press release. Harris also accused County Board Chairman Kurt Prenzler of "playing politics with people's livelihood and safety."

Republicans maintain a 15-14 majority on the County Board.

"We didn't need any Democrat votes to pass this resolution, but we went to great lengths to include Democrats every step of the way and keep politics out of this plan. This plan wasn't about politics, it was about helping struggling people in our county. That's why I find it highly disappointing that Mr. Harris would desperately try to make this about partisan politics," said County Board Member Ray Wesley (R-Godfrey), who also serves as Madison County Republican Party Chairman.

"Eleven Democrats voted for this resolution, so does he think his own Democrat board members were putting politics ahead of people's livelihood and safety?" asked Tom McRae (R-Bethalto). "Our board has had its fair share of partisan moments over the past several years. This clearly was not one of those times, and the results of the vote demonstrate that."

David Michael (R-Highland) also weighed in. “Chairman Prenzler had sent a very nice letter to the governor 2 weeks ago requesting that he allow our county to re-open with a safe and responsible plan and didn’t get a response. Our local Democrat legislators have been silent throughout this stay at home order until just hours before we were to approve our resolution. Their constituents were not being represented in Springfield, so our board stepped in to fill the leadership void and provide representation for our businesses and unemployed workers who are struggling under the governor’s extended stay at home order. And we did it in complete bi-partisan fashion the way government is supposed to work.”

"A shutdown is not a long-term solution. While our nation has been hyper-focused on coronavirus, other very significant also life-threatening issues have emerged and are not getting necessary attention. The pandemic's impact has been diverse and far reaching," said board member Erica Harriss (R-Glen Carbon). "I'm happy the county has taken a stance we are not going to stand in the way of businesses opening safely. I hope our local Democrat legislators will work with us in a bi-partisan fashion to protect businesses against punitive action by the governor's office."

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