



KENOSHA SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

1000 – 55TH STREET

KENOSHA, WISCONSIN 53140

**MAIN OFFICE TELEPHONE NUMBER: (262) 605-5100
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SHERIFF DAVID BETH

MEDIA RELEASE

DATE: April 23, 2020
EVENT: Sheriff Beth-Letter to Wisconsin Sheriffs
LOCATION: Kenosha County Sheriff's Department
RELEASED BY: Lt. Eric Klinkhammer - Public Information Officer

Sheriff Beth sent the below message to all of the Sheriffs in the State of Wisconsin this morning.

We will not make any further statements nor releases regarding this issue.

"Dear Sheriffs

I am usually pretty quiet down here in my corner of the State, but I just can't be at this time because you really... REALLY... need to think about any decision not to support the Governors Stay at Home Order.

The past 6 weeks or so has changed all of our lives and those that live, work, and play in our counties. My family is fortunate as I am still considered essential even though many of my staff may not think so, and my wife is a teacher and still teaching online. We are both getting paid. Our struggles are small compared to many in the community.

The battle of closing down our Country and States has, up until recently, remained at the Federal and State levels. The President has experts to advise him whether he listens to them or not is a different matter. Governors have access to experts and rely on the best information they are provided to make decisions. Just so all of you know, I am not a doctor, scientist, or a constitutional attorney, and I don't play one on TV. I rely on my Governor, my Health Division, and my Corporation Council to advise me in times like this.

Please understand that I truly love and respect every Sheriff in the State of Wisconsin, especially those that surround me! With that being said, I know there are only a few ways I will leave this office. The first is death, voted out of office or removed by the Governor. Since this is my last term, I am hoping for a 4th and more desirable option, and that is not running for my 6th term.

As I stated earlier, this battle on reopening our State (s) has remained out of our hands but in our faces in the media every second of the day at national and state levels. By any Sheriff publicly declaring you will not be enforcing the Governor's Order, you have now brought that fight down to a county level, and every Sheriff is now the gatekeeper to your counties' prosperity. Each one of us now wields the magic wand to keeping businesses from failing and families keeping a roof over their heads. I don't know about you, but I am far too busy to be carrying one more magic wand.



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Unintentional consequences will also stack up against each one of us and already has. Some in your community will think you are a savior, and others will hate you. I have received both kinds of email and phone calls. I have been told about loans, mortgages, families and what a #@?% I am because I am enforcing the Governor's Order. I really wish this fight had never been brought to my level. Media and the community will pit Sheriff against Sheriff. No matter which path you have chosen, we have now been thrust into this role of God and deciding who is going to open. Did I tell you yet, I really wish I was not being placed into this position!

By us not supporting the Governor's Order, that does not mean the businesses can open. County Health Divisions can keep them closed, but now they need to deputize citizens to enforce the order, and they are the bad guy in this situation. In Kenosha, I work very closely with other county divisions and officials and always have. We have each other's back and support each other with a united front. Maybe you don't have this in your county.

My Corporation Council has advised against venturing out on my own and not enforcing the Governor's Order. I was told if someone were to get sick or even worse, die after I declared I was not enforcing the order, they probably would not be defending me against any lawsuits from the public if one came forward for me not following the Governor's Order. I was on my own and maybe personally liable in the court of law. I am not sure about you, but I really like Corp Council on my side with every time I get sued.

Once again, please understand that I respect each one of you that hold the office of Sheriff, but I REALLY wish the fight that has covered this world had not been brought down to my level. I will stand with the oath I took on January 3, 2003, to uphold Federal, State, and local laws. This does not mean I agree or would not do things differently, but I will not violate the order."

Best of luck to all of you

Dave Beth

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