



Marion County Board of County Commissioners

McPherson Governmental Campus

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District 1 - David Moore, Commissioner
District 2 - Kathy Bryant, Chair
District 3 - Jeff Gold, Vice Chair
District 4 - Carl Zalak III, Commissioner
District 5 - Michelle Stone, Commissioner

April 30, 2020

Via Electronic and USPS Delivery

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor
The Capitol
400 S. Momoe Street Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001
governorron.desantis@eog.myflorida.com

Honorable Governor DeSantis,

On behalf of Marion County's small businessmen and women, we thank you for your dedicated efforts to reopening Florida and also urge you to consider our request below.

Marion County has a current COVID-19 positivity rate of 3.9 percent and has never been over 5 percent which is important to note, as Marion County is home to many persons aged 65 and older. Even within our retired and vulnerable communities, we have managed this COVID-19 event with success.

It was through our strict adherence to all executive orders and CDC guidelines, Marion County has maintained a stronghold on this virus preventing the surges we were projected to see. To date, we have 175 positive cases, of which only 5 of those cases are currently hospitalized. Our daily percentage of ER visits which mention cough, fever or shortness of breath peaked in mid-March and have since returned to levels of early 2020. At this juncture, more of our community is suffering with the loss of revenue and foreseeable future of permanent unemployment than we are this virus.

Marion County is home to 258 hair/salon establishments, employing 1,077 individuals, 61 gyms and fitness establishments that provide 444 local jobs and 612 restaurants with almost 10,000 employees. Our restaurateurs will not survive on a 25-percent seating capacity. We implore you to allow us to implement the Re-Open Florida Task Force Phase 1 Plan for our restaurants, gyms and personal services.

Marion County's elected leaders are united in our request, urging you to allow us to take the reins on our county and make independent decisions for our residents, visitors and business people, with an understanding we have a plan to do so that will continue to mitigate the spread of this virus while keeping our families, patrons and neighbors safe.

Empowering Marion for Success

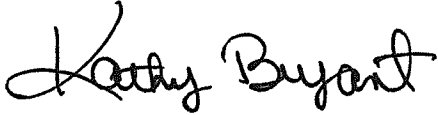
www.marioncountyfl.org

Just as counties coordinated with your office to address special needs prior to the execution of executive orders, counties should, once again, be given consideration as it pertains to advancing recovery phases to meet our specific needs.

Our priority is the health and wellbeing of every individual who lives in our amazing county. With your blessing to take the lead on our county, we can continue to save lives while we also continue to save local business.

Thank you, in advance, for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathy Bryant". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kathy" and last name "Bryant" clearly distinguishable.

Kathy Bryant, Chairman
Marion County Board of County Commissioners

c: Jeff Gold, Vice Chair
 David Moore, Commissioner
 Carl Zalak, III, Commissioner
 Michelle Stone, Commissioner
 Mounir Bouyounes, County Administrator