

## **MEMO FROM EMMETT MAYOR GORDON W. PETRIE**

### **SUBJECT: RISK ACCEPTANCE, A WAKE UP, AND THE NEED TO CONNECT SOME DOTS IN THE NEAR TERM (Part 2)**

*Knowledge of the past is the only foundation we have from which to peer into and try to measure the future. Expert knowledge, however indispensable, is no substitute for a generous and comprehending outlook upon the human story with all its sadness and with all its unquenchable hope. (Winston Churchill)*

For future planning, Idaho has dots to connect and hard questions to consider about COVID-19. However, before diving into specifics, the rhetorical questions setting the stage become: Will we finally understand that notwithstanding any claim we live under a democratic-representative form of government, aka, a Constitutional Republic, energized by the consent of the governed, our nation actually operates under a Wilsonian-FDR-style Administrative State?

Will we ever see the end of our current system, where the consent of the governed is supplanted by the reign of the experts? Do elections really have consequences? Indeed, have elections become irrelevant—notwithstanding their constitutional requirements? Presidents come and go, but the same bureaucrats seem to live on.

Over the last 55 years, we have tasted the bitter fruit of an unsustainable system oozing from our nation's capital. Its fetid puree has produced a harmful, even destructive, mold in what's left of the "federalism bread crumbs" scattered about our fifty states. Ironically, we now have fifty different experiments to consider on the nation's response to COVID-19. What worked? What didn't? While all data are not available, we might conclude states doing best in the unintended-consequences department happened to control the least—simply reminding residents to socially distance, wash hands, and, perhaps, mask-up.

Even partly crowded, open-friendly states like Florida and Georgia did well, unlike New York. (Florida ensured retirement communities and assisted-living facilities had needed protection.) On that note, if you see any "warriors" who work at our assisted living facilities, make sure you give them a big, best-practice thank you for the outstanding job they did protecting our most vulnerable residents: no deaths. What a blessing! What a team!

The issue, then, for federal and state governments vis-à-vis COVID-19 becomes which one applies: an informed government telling the sovereign electorate, "See, we *told* you so," or an informed and sovereign electorate telling a misinformed government because of "expert" failure,

“See, we told *you* so!” Will government ever regain the trust of clear-thinking, analytical people who do not deserve the mess made by the subject-matter experts? The CDC produced scary models and governors took the bait.

To properly analyze Idaho’s response to COVID-19 (their After-Action-Review), state officials might consider who had the risk. For infection purposes, the answer amounts to most anyone—not unlike the common cold or flu. Clearly, that’s reflected in Gem County by the fact we had COVID-19 patients ranging between the ages of 18 to 69. Nevertheless, municipalities and states typically don’t shut down vibrant economies for the common cold or even a virulent strain of flu. When analyzing risk, we must focus on real risk: those most likely to die; not numbers of those infected.

According to Idaho’s Corona Virus website, as of 28 May, Idaho suffered a total of 82 deaths in 2731 infections. It should come as no surprise that Octogenarians and older comprise the hardest hit: 54 out of 82. This amounts to 65.9 percent of all deaths. Next, come those 70 to 79 showing 17 deaths, for 20.7 percent. 60-69 years of age has 9 deaths, earning 11 percent. Last come the late Boomers and the start of Generation X: 50-59 years of age: 2 deaths.

Compare these statistics with Idaho’s flu/pneumonia death statistics for 2018, the last available CDC numbers: 235 Idahoans lost their lives to flu and/or pneumonia. As seen, only 82 Idahoans have died of “attributed” COVID-19 (at this writing). Rounding arbitrarily up to 100 still makes it over 2 to 1 with flu/pneumonia beating COVID-19. For the sake of argument, let’s make it 235 to 235, a 1 to 1 ratio. Obviously, Idaho’s hospitals could still handle any surge. Notwithstanding, the CDC made a regrettable decision to place the US economy on a “ventilator” to flatten the curve. Idaho’s economy now fights for air because of unfortunate recommendations made by detached bureaucrats in Washington, D.C., and Idaho health officials followed. Make no mistake, all deaths matter; nevertheless, Idaho crippled its economy for a fraction of the deaths it experienced during the 2018 flu/pneumonia season.

To this writer’s untrained, myopic eyes, it appeared obvious by mid-April Idaho had flattened the curve. If currently practiced mitigation efforts of social distancing, hand washing, perhaps sneeze guards, had remained in effect, AND PRACTICED—with special attention paid to the most vulnerable—that should have allowed all businesses to reopen a full month before the decision to slow-roll it. Yes, we must be safe; nobody argues otherwise. Unquestionably, child-like-petulant behavior will set back Idaho. Yet, will we discover we can only be sorry for now—

not safe versus sorry—sorry for lost opportunities to restart our economy sooner and even save some businesses?

Maybe the Centers for Disease Control need renaming to Centers for Citizen Control. The CDC certainly didn't control COVID-19—We the People did—in spite of the CDC having many things backwards when the virus first hit our shores. It's time to end our century-long experiment with the Administrative State and its bureaucratic disenfranchisement. Let's get back to the bedrock of what our Constitution says on its face, not the "zeitgeist" 5 out of 9 unelected-appointed-for-life justices manufacture during any given term of SCOTUS.

Our children's nursery rhymes and bedtime stories teach everything we need to know about good government AND good citizenship: work hard, save for rainy days, and don't tell whoppers. Remember the boy who cried "Wolf!" once too often? Sound familiar? Clearly, then, we see that when the government picks winners while advancing wildly inflated models, we all lose. Every job is essential—to someone.