

I appreciate that these bills are being held. As additional time is taken to think about them over the next week, I ask my colleagues to consider some things and I also want St. Louis County residents to be crystal clear about what these bills propose.

Each of these bills makes a significant change to St. Louis County's Emergency Management Code

I'll share:

Bill 220 (Trakas) adds to the aforementioned Code that "No state of emergency declared by the County Executive pertaining to A PANDEMIC shall extend for a duration beyond the 15th day following the effective date of such declaration UNLESS the County Council adopts a resolution approving extension of such state of emergency." Notice that the new provision is exclusive to a pandemic. The bill continues to say that "Any state of emergency declaration in effect on the effective date of this ordinance shall terminate upon the expiration of the 15th day following the effective date of this ordinance unless the County Council adopts a resolution to extend the declaration." In other words, if this bill passes, current executive orders covering everything from the establishment of the St. Louis County CARES Economic Rescue Team to limits on crowd sizes to changes in County operations...all based on the best scientific evidence to stop the spread of the Coronavirus, will expire in two weeks without the Council successfully taking the initiative to intervene.

Bill 222 (Fitch and Harder) adds identical language with the exception that it targets public health orders, and would require a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority Council vote to extend a public health order beyond 15 days of its effective date. Like Bill 220, Bill 223 (also Fitch and Harder) targets executive orders, but would require a $\frac{2}{3}$ majority Council vote to extend. Again, like bill 220, each of these bills are exclusive to a pandemic...which in my opinion makes for a flimsy argument that these bills are about providing for checks and balances, which some of my colleagues have stated.

Here are my main concerns about the impact of passage of these bills:

-The County Counselor's office has opined that Bills 222 and 223 have a host of legal issues. As such, it could be presumed that a Court challenge would arise, costing taxpayer money, and additional human bandwidth we just don't have right now.

-Second, once these bills go into effect, life-saving executive and public health orders could end in 15 days. 8 Executive Orders and 16 Public Health Orders have been enacted over the past 7 months, covering everything from making it mandatory to wear a mask in public, to limiting the size of crowds, to establishing an Economic Rescue Team, to mandating reporting requirements for residential living facilities. Many of our public comments tonight made it clear-- pass these bills because we don't want to wear masks. Think about the devastating consequences of rolling back these orders.

-Are there unintended consequences of these potential ordinances-- what impact could these measures have on our ability as a County to receive future pandemic relief? Why would a funder-- governmental or otherwise-- feel compelled to provide relief dollars to St. Louis County if we don't have even the most basic measures in place to stop the spread of the virus?

Maybe some of my colleagues are unhappy about the evidence-based health measures that have been ordered here in St. Louis County to keep us healthy and safe. I'm not, and I know that Linda, who checks my groceries at my Maplewood Schnucks, and her colleagues aren't unhappy about these precautions either. Neither are my son's preschool teachers. So if you agree with us, and think things like our mask ordinance, space restrictions, and other measures have served us well, then why would you vote in favor of these bills? Perhaps you want St. Louis County to go to Court, or you want to get rid of common sense public health measures during a global pandemic, or you want to disqualify our community from receiving further assistance money.

It is clear to me that some of my colleagues have issues with our County Executive, but I plea with them to put politics aside and put our constituents and neighbors at the center of our decisions, ESPECIALLY our vulnerable, working class neighbors who are unfairly bearing the burden brought on by our state and federal leaders whose arrogance, contempt, and hatred have made a mockery of this virus as well as those of us who are doing all we can to get through this.

We must not set the precedent of legislative interference during an emergency, in this instance primarily led by members of the GOP, as they take a page from the Trump White House, thumb their noses at the elderly, working class, and others at high risk, and subvert measures that are saving lives.

I'm a no.