



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on April 16, 2020

## Michigan Residents Stage Largest Protest to Date Against Stay-at-home Orders

Americans across the country are growing frustrated over what critics are calling a draconian response to the novel coronavirus, and there is perhaps no better example of this than the “Operation Gridlock” protest that converged on Michigan’s capital on April 15 — the largest protest against a state’s stay-at-home orders thus far.

The Michigan Conservative Coalition commenced “Operation Gridlock” on Wednesday to protest Governor Gretchen Whitmer’s stay-at-home orders in the state. Thousands of protesters appeared outside of the Capitol, both on foot and in their vehicles, to create a bumper-to-bumper traffic jam, Fox 2 Detroit reported.



According to Michigan Conservative Coalition organizer Meshawn Maddock, the protest was bipartisan, with Democrats, Republicans, and Independents in attendance. Maddock contends residents have united against vast government overreach in the state.

“Quarantine is when you restrict movement of sick people. Tyranny is when you restrict the movement of healthy people,” Maddock [told Fox News](#). “Every person has learned a harsh lesson about social distancing. We don’t need a nanny state to tell people how to be careful.”

Governor Whitmer had issued her first mandatory stay-at-home executive order on March 23 to slow the spread of the virus, but issued a second order on April 9 extending the state’s stay-at-home order until April 30. The governor defended her second order, citing 20,000 confirmed cases of the virus and 959 deaths in Michigan as of April 8. But the order prompted backlash as critics noted its inconsistencies.

“State residents can’t travel to their Up North cottages, but Illinois residents who own one in Michigan apparently can,” the Detroit Free Press [opined](#). The order also restricts travel between two residences but allows individuals to return to a home or place of residence from outside the state. It also allows residents from inside the state to leave the state for a home or residence elsewhere. Critics contend the order contains too many double standards.

Also under Whitmer’s expanded order, residents cannot purchase items deemed non-essential from local stores, including paint or gardening tools – items that, for some, are invaluable recreational tools to help pass the time while they are forced to stay home. The order requires stores to “cordon off” aisles deemed non-essential, many of which pertain to household projects that many had hoped to undertake during the stay-at-home orders. Meanwhile, critics begrudge the order’s continued allowance of Michigan Lottery sale purchases. The Detroit Free Press scathingly reports, “In-store purchases of Michigan Lottery tickets are still permitted but buying a can of paint or a bag of seeds is off limits.”



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Maddock notes that under Whitmer's stay-at-home orders, it is against the law for her and her husband to check on their elderly parents. Under the new order, residents are banned from crossing the street to visit neighbors or drive to see friends, *USA Today* reports.

Maddock contends the response to COVID-19 has been more destructive than the virus itself.

"The health-care system is basically shut down," she said. "People with issues are having trouble seeing a doctor because everyone is focused on the virus."

Meanwhile, Governor Whitmer responded to the protest several hours later to criticize the protesters for violating social-distancing guidelines.

"We know that this rally endangered people," she said. "We know that when people gather that way without masks, they were in close proximity they were touching one another, that that's how COVID-19 spreads."

A Facebook group called Michiganders Against Excessive Quarantine has drawn more than 250,000 followers as residents are growing weary and concerned over the government's overreach. And according to the *Detroit Free Press*, the Facebook Group Michigan United for Liberty is planning another demonstration at the Capitol on April 30.

The *New York Post* reports "Operation Gridlock" was one of several demonstrations planned across the country to push back against various states' stay-at-home orders.

In Kentucky, former Governor Matt Bevin led more than 100 protesters in a demonstration on Wednesday against Governor Andy Beshear's work restrictions in response to COVID-19. Equipped with bullhorns and signs calling Beshear a "tyrant," the protesters demanded the governor "Open up Kentucky" and shouted "We want to work," the *Courier-Journal* reports.

Rallies have been held in [North Carolina](#), Utah, and [Ohio](#) in recent days, the *New York Times* [reports](#), while others have been scheduled in Virginia, Texas, Washington, Oregon, and a number of other states.

Protesters contend the stay-at-home orders go too far by requiring, rather than suggesting, specific protocols.

Tyler Miller, 39, an engineering technician in Bremerton, Washington, organized a rally at the State Capitol in Olympia this weekend in response to the state's limitations on gatherings and travel.

"I want the governor to say that these are strongly encouraged practices, but that people have the right to gather," Miller said. "I want people to be as safe as possible, but I also want their liberties to be respected in the process."



Photo: AP Images



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*Raven Clabough acquired her bachelor's and master's degrees in English at the University of Albany in upstate New York. She currently lives in Pennsylvania and has been a writer for The New American since 2010.*



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