



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on December 15, 2020

New Jersey Gym Racks Up \$1.2 million in Fines, Remains Open in Defiance

New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal ramped up the pressure on the Atilis Gym in Bellmawr last week by [filing a motion](#) seeking \$124,000 from its owners. State officials had been watching several videos posted online by the gym's owners, Ian Smith and Frank Trumbetti, and criticized "Atilis Gym's outrageous behavior and unjustifiable contemptuous conduct."

The owners' "outrageous behavior and unjustifiable contemptuous conduct" dates back to May when the owners kept their upscale gym and fitness center near Philadelphia open in defiance of New Jersey Governor Chris Murphy's demands that they shut down in response to COVID-19.



YouTube

Grewal is going to have to get in line to get paid. State and local officials have cited the gym and its owners more than 60 times since May, and fines have topped \$1.2 million, none of which the owners have any intention of paying. Smith told NewsBreak.com days after the latest filing that Governor Murphy "has thrown everything he possibly could to shut us down."

He added:

He has arrested my partner and [me], give us over 60 citations, some of them criminal. He fines us \$15,497.76 per day for every day we're open.

Our fines are totaling over \$1.2 million, but every single day, Frank and I open our gym.

The gym remained open even after the borough council of Bellmawr — all Democrats — voted to rescind its business license. The owners filed suit and their gym remains open during the process.

Grewal is a slow learner. Previously he called out the gym's owners:

Atilis Gym's brazen conduct is abhorrent to an organized judicial system, jeopardizes the public health and safety of New Jerseyans, and must not be tolerated.

It is clear that additional sanctions ... are necessary to coerce Atilis Gym's compliance with the court's order.

All that did was stiffen the owners' resistance. From the very beginning, Governor Murphy decided to target their business as an example to intimidate others. He said back in May that if they don't comply, "We will take action. If you [Smith and Trumbetti] show up at that gym tomorrow ... we will ... enforce this."



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The owners defied the governor and they have become a cause célèbre among those involved in the freedom fight. The governor should have picked his targets more carefully. The owners know their Constitution and their rights and are willing to risk everything, including their business and their freedoms, to defend them.

As the pressure mounted, so did their resistance. Following the boarding up of the gym by local sheriffs, the owners not only kicked in the boards but posted their defiance online. Along with the video they stated:

You will not trample on our rights and you will not destroy our lives. We will not back down. Ever....

We didn't pick this fight. This fight came to us.

Frank and I made a promise to each other that we would see this thing all the way through — no matter what. We have not broken any laws, yet we are being treated like criminals.

Tyrants use force to exercise their will — threat of imprisonment, financial ruin, and more. And a tyrant is what we have in office. No science, no data, only conclusive statements with no proof.

We presented a plan, a sensible one and opened responsibly — and you decided to make it personal, so now here we are.

You will not tread on my rights, you will not ruin everything we've worked our whole lives for, and you will be held responsible for your trespasses.

#lionsnotsheep

The owners have appeared on Tucker Carlson Tonight, and more than 8,000 people have contributed in excess of \$300,000 to their GoFundMe accounts to help pay their legal fees.

Smith says they are following various safety measures which they have deemed adequate to protect their customers:

All of our other safety measures have kept our members safe as you can tell with the 83,000 visits and no outbreaks linked to the facility.

People are ready to get back to life and we can do so in a safe manner without shutting down businesses and closing them for good. And Frank and I set out to prove that back in May with our safety protocol.

It has been in place and has shown to be effective.

The impact of the COVID shutdowns is decimating small business owners, and Smith calls it "criminal":

What's happening to the middle class and small businesses in America is nothing short of a complete tragedy. I would go so far as to call it criminal.

You [Governor Murphy] are putting people out of business for good. You are making them reliant on big government. You are taking away their civil liberties under the guise of pretending like you care about public health.



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He had this message for other small business owners:

It's important that every single person get in the fight. Every single small business, every single freedom-loving American, every single American that supports the Constitution and loves the American way of life.

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