



Written by [Steve Byas](#) on March 20, 2020

“Stay at Home,” Governor Gavin Newsom Orders Californians

Predicting Thursday that 56 percent of California would eventually contract the coronavirus COVID-19 within the next eight weeks, California’s Democrat Governor Gavin Newsom has issued an order for all people living within the state to “stay at home.” While some essential businesses such as pharmacies and grocery stores will continue operating, nonessential businesses will be shuttered.



“The Office of Emergency Services is directed to take necessary steps to ensure compliance with this Order,” Newsom said in Executive Order N-33-20.

“This Order is being issued to protect the public health of Californians,” Newsom said in his “executive order.” His stated purpose is to “mitigate the impact of COVID-19,” adding, “Our goal is simple, we want to bend the curve, and disrupt the spread of the virus.”

Newsom also estimated that as many as 60,000 homeless persons in the state will eventually be infected. California has more homeless persons than any other state, around 150,000. Exactly how Newsom has arrived at his figures of 56 percent and 60,000 is not clear, but if his calculations are accurate, then this would mean a smaller percentage of the state’s homeless will contract the virus (40 percent) than the population of the state as a whole (56 percent).

This would seem to contradict his underlying assumption that Californians are safer being confined in their homes than if they left their homes. After all, a person who is “homeless,” is, by definition, not inside of a home.

Of course, Newsom does not know how many Californians will contract the virus, whether they be homeless or those who have a home. He is simply guessing, sort of like someone who guesses which team will win the Super Bowl.

This raises a serious question. If the governor can, on his own volition, issue such a draconian order, based on nothing more than his own guess, what is to stop the governor from issuing such an order at any time he wishes?

One would think there would be massive civil disobedience to such an order in normal times. What will be the reaction of Californians to this order is uncertain as this article is being written, but Newsom said that he is “confident” that the people in the state will follow his edict, which he said is justified as it is meant to “bend the curve” of new cases.

In a way, Newsom really cannot lose on his prediction. After all, if the number of COVID-19 cases were to reach anywhere near the 56 percent figure, he can claim vindication. If, as is more likely, the number of cases is much less than 56 percent, he can claim that it was his stay-at-home order that reduced the percentage. This will set the dangerous precedent that governors can order the general population to stay at home. And, if the governor can order individuals to stay in their homes, can he not also order



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individuals to leave their homes? As is the case with other such incidents that have taken place during national emergencies, they will be cited as some sort of “precedent” for future power-grabbing by government.

Thus far, nearly a thousand Californians are confirmed as having the virus, with 18 deaths, according to Johns Hopkins University.

If Californians cannot leave their homes, then how are they supposed to make a living to pay for groceries? Certainly, grocery stores can deliver groceries, and they can sell those groceries on credit, and even give away some products, but at some point, they will have to have some money to continue to operate.

Actually, Californians should not be surprised at such an order by the government they have freely elected. Over the past generation, Californians have turned increasingly to politicians who have little regard for the free market or any other sort of freedom. On the contrary, their governors and legislatures have increasingly intruded themselves into the personal lives of their citizens, insisting that they have the right to command the general population on a wide range of issues.

While the present situation is serious, it should be noted that those politicians who love the intoxication of power will use that power, using whatever excuse they can dream up to do so. As President Barack Obama’s aide Rahm Emmanuel once said, “Never let a crisis go to waste.”

When the population feels desperate, that is the time when they are most willing to surrender their civil liberties. Sadly, Governor Newsom is probably correct that he will face little opposition to his dictate that his fellow Californians stay inside their homes, whereas under normal circumstances they would be much less likely to comply. But, once this precedent has been set, it will be used to argue for doing other things that are supposedly in the public’s interest, regardless of what rights are trampled.

Photo of Gov. Newsom: AP Images

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