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Editorial & Opinions
ENOUGH

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The Pres. and Gov. can only lift restrictions

Our people will decide when growth will resume



By **JEFF JOBE**
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It seems from a well balanced review of headlines and news articles that the coronavirus curve has flattened, but sadly our state and national economy continues to tank.

Now, with a full month of following guidelines and stay-at-home advisories, Kentuckians will rightfully be looking for the lessening of restrictions and goals in place for some return to normalcy.

In a conference call with state governors last Thursday, President Donald Trump outlined new guidelines for a gradual reopening of the economy after May 1. It centers around a three-phase process as relaxing restrictions on work, travel, school, and social activity for states.

Yet, all news accounts indicate that states must demonstrate a 14-day downward trend for the virus, their symptoms, and documented cases. Plus, they must make sure their hospitals are functioning comfortably within their patient capacity and are equipped to self-test their staffs.

This disease has dealt a devastating blow to our state and nation in the form of not only an economic devastation but

also in the form of motivation and optimism. Our national and state mental health will become an issue if we can't begin to show hope for those whose lives have been drastically affected. With 35,000 deaths and the panic associated with all the negative news surrounding those deaths, this will soon be followed by the depression and despair that is a direct affect of more than 22 million Americans out of work. Health care experts are expecting thousands to die from suicide and drug overdoses as a result of these layoffs. That jarring forecast could exceed the death toll projected for the virus itself. One study released indicates a projection of 77,000 if our country even hits the 32% mark.

Kentuckians want and need to get back to work. We are in a region spared by the virus's full intensity, and much of our region is low population and could begin a return with strong encouragement of social distancing and cleaning routines.

President Trump and Governor Beshear can lift the sanctions in place. Yet, they don't control when our economy will resume. This will be up to us, the American people.

When we feel our health and our jobs are safe, then and only then will we see a return of the fastest growing economy in America's history.

EDITORIAL

Let them be little



By **MARY BETH SALLEE**
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The COVID-19 pandemic has been difficult on everyone, from self-isolating at home away from friends and loved ones to financial strain and the unknown. This chaotic time is tough on us adults.

But guess what? It's hard on our kids, too.

My son is only five-years-old, but he is quite mature for his age. I tried for as long as I could to keep him "sheltered" from talk of this new coronavirus. I wouldn't watch the news in front of him. I tried to avoid phone conversations on the topic because his little ears hear everything. When this pandemic found its way to our country, I purchased masks and hid them away hoping I never had to use them and hoping I never had to explain to my son why I bought them.

And yet I did.

I've had to use masks. I've had to have unavoidable conference calls that I know he hears. I've had to explain to him why we can't stay the night with grandma and pa or why Aunt T and Uncle Chad can't come play. I've had to have my little one watch me spray down an entire house with Lysol and use antibacterial wipes on every single item that I bring into the house.

I've even had him ask me a few tough questions: What is going on? What does the virus do? How did it get here?

But what has hurt my heart the most in all of this is when I look at his sweet, little face and know his mind and heart are troubled as he asks, "Mom, am I gonna get the virus?"

How does a parent respond to that?

Truth is, our children are going through a lot. Although they may not 100% grasp all of this chaos, they certainly feel it. They know that the world has momentarily stopped spinning. They know people are getting sick. Our children are worried and anxious and hurting, too.

In times like these, the best thing we can do for our children is simply to let them be little. Allow them to stay up later than usual and watch one last movie. Help them build a fort in the living room, and let them spend a night or two sleeping inside. Let them run and scream and giggle and make messes.

In this unprecedented time, we can at least let our children drift away from the chaos and simply be a kid. Even in the middle of a pandemic, we can still let them be little.

EXPERIENCE continued from page one

tor on a Friday during the end of March and was tested for COVID-19. At this time I didn't have a fever at all, only body aches, very dry cough and pain in my chest, flu like symptoms (only more intense). I didn't realize what was wrong with me, but I knew two things:

1. It was something that I had absolutely never felt in my entire life.
2. I knew in my heart that it was about to get a lot worse. After being tested, I was sent home to self-isolate and to wait for my test results. As I suspected it would, the illness was progressing, and I was feeling very distressed. All symptoms I mentioned already were growing more intense. I started to get a fever which continued to come and go throughout my entire experience (everything intensified every day as the sun would set). I became very short of breathe, to the point in fact I was certain that not only was I going to die but I also feared that if I had to die then I'd have to do it on my own because I had made the decision at an earlier date to isolate myself into the spare bedroom in hopes of not making my husband sick.

The following Tuesday after the Friday I had went for testing, I received the phone call from the doctor's office. I answered, and after confirming my personal information the nurse proceeded to in-

form me that my test result was back and that I was in fact COVID-19 positive. She informed me to absolutely do not leave my house or make physical contact with anyone. I was in a disbelief kind of state and scared. The nurse before letting me go also told me that the health department would be contacting me and to go to the ER if I absolutely had to - but only if I absolutely had to - and for me to call first to inform them that I have COVID-19 so they could be prepared to provide care and not infect themselves.

The Fayette County Health Department contacted me on April 1. I was instructed that I was going to be placed on an in home self-isolation movement restriction order (house arrest without the ankle bracelet). I was being placed starting from April 1 and until further notice. I was also instructed to provide all the names and phone number of everyone that I had been in physical contact with during the time in which I first felt sick. I had already taken some measure the very day that I got my positive test result. I worked at an insurance agency and had contact with many individuals, more than I could possibly think of. So, I posted my situation to my personal Facebook account in hopes that it might reach anyone who I'd had contact with and simply wasn't able to think of.

I knew that horrible things

would be said about me, and it was a sacrifice in which I was willing to make in order to ensure that others would seek the medical attention they might require. I felt extremely guilty, and it hurt me, the idea of me potentially making someone sick or worse.

COVID-19 was by far the worst thing that I've ever experienced. I kept getting a little worse, and I was no longer able to sleep. I was hardly unable to breathe, felt like I was going to suffocate. It made me dizzy and have bad panic attacks and very anxious. As everything was worse at night I would lay but kind of sit using big pillows and sit and wait until dawn each day just so that I could try to get some rest. I had literally become afraid of darkness, the night. It truly was in a sense a beast that came out at night. It had taken a lot from me. I lost my job while on the order from the health department, no return. I'm still anxious during the night, and it's hard to sleep. My lungs are still recovering, but I have inhalers and treatments that help me until they do fully recover.

While sick, I had begun to find ways to keep my mind busy during the night and kept thinking about Russell County and all the people I love and care about so much. It worried me because so many people don't understand the seriousness of COVID-19. So, I started

reaching out to people and creating way for people to come together and want to help each other while social distancing. I also reached out to explain about symptoms and things that seem to make it more comfortable. I also wanted people to know that I care more about their health than what they might be thinking or saying about me because of the fact I was COVID-19 positive. I wanted to make sure that anyone who hadn't personally known of anyone with COVID-19 to know me because from the moment you actually know someone sick, the situation becomes more real, makes you more cautious. I wanted people to be cautious, to be cautious is to save lives.

On April 11, I finally received my order release from the health department. I'm feeling a lot better, but my lungs still need more time to recover. I will be called to donate my plasma at UK hospital in Lexington to a specialist who will use it to help fight against COVID-19. I will not stop until I knock this virus on the ground during its weakest moment as it did me. It attacked me physically and mentally, but today I feel as if someone literally gave me my life back, and it's an amazing feeling. I hope that you will use my experience to not only give others hope and knowledge, but people have to know that COVID-19 is extremely real but so is recovery, and we do recover.