



Federal Judge Rules PA Governor's COVID-19 Restrictions Unconstitutional

Exposed in his own tyranny, Pennsylvania Gov. Wolf whines like a pre-adolescent brat, “but all the other governors are doing it”. The fact is, “all the other governors” should immediately rescind all of their unconstitutional mandates and restore our civil liberties. □ TN Editor

Gov. Tom Wolf’s pandemic restrictions that required people to stay at home, placed size limits on gatherings and ordered “non-life-sustaining” businesses to shut down are unconstitutional, a federal judge ruled Monday.

U.S. District Judge William Stickman IV, who was appointed by President Donald Trump, sided with plaintiffs that included hair salons, drive-in movie theaters, a farmer’s market vendor, a horse trainer and several Republican officeholders in their lawsuit against Wolf, a Democrat, and his health secretary.

The Wolf administration’s pandemic policies have been overreaching and arbitrary and violated citizens’ constitutional rights, Stickman wrote in

his ruling.

The governor's efforts to slow the spread of the coronavirus "were undertaken with the good intention of addressing a public health emergency. But even in an emergency, the authority of government is not unfettered," Stickman wrote. "The Constitution cannot accept the concept of a 'new normal' where the basic liberties of the people can be subordinated to open-ended emergency mitigation measures."

The ruling means that current restrictions, including ones that limit the size of indoor and outdoor gatherings, can't be enforced, according to attorney Thomas W. King III, who represented the plaintiffs.

"It's really 100% in our favor. The court found in all respects that the orders issued by the governor and the secretary of health were unconstitutional. What it means is they can't do it again, and they should not have done it in the past," King said.

Wolf's spokesperson, Lyndsay Kensinger, said the administration will seek delayed enforcement of the ruling while it appeals.

"The actions taken by the administration were mirrored by governors across the country and saved, and continue to save lives in the absence of federal action. This decision is especially worrying as Pennsylvania and the rest of the country are likely to face a challenging time with the possible resurgence of COVID-19 and the flu in the fall and winter," Kensinger said in a written statement.

At a news conference Monday, the state health secretary, Dr. Rachel Levine, pleaded with Pennsylvania residents to maintain social distancing and avoid crowds despite the ruling. She said of the ruling that "anything that limits our ability and the number of tools we have is a challenge to public health."

Courts had consistently rejected challenges to Wolf's power to order businesses to close during the pandemic, and many other governors, Republican and Democrat, undertook similar measures as the virus spread across the country.

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