The Phyllis Schlafly Report

Don't Bail Out the Shutdown States

By John and Andy Schlafly

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A proposal by two senators to send $500 billion to state governments, due to the coronavirus, would be a horrible incentive. It would encourage governors to keep their economies closed despite their losses in tax revenues from the lack of business activity.

Some Republican-led states have courageously reopened or remained open for business, and their money should not be taken and sent to mostly Democrat-controlled states who ordered people to stop working. States should have an incentive to reopen, as the Republican Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia is doing, rather than receiving bailouts to remain closed.

Yet Senators Bob Menendez (D-NJ) and Bill Cassidy (R-LA) want to appropriate a half-trillion dollars to state governments in addition to the $150 billion which the last bailout bill sent to them. These handouts to state governments would remove the fiscal pressure to reopen their economies.

Under Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy, New Jersey has impeded access to early and prophylactic treatment for COVID-19 in non-hospitalized patients, resulting in avoidable deaths from the virus. Gov. Murphy has also infringed on the rights of protesters who demand that the overly broad shutdown end.

New Jerseyan Kim Pagan faces up to six months in jail and a $1,000 fine for merely organizing a protest, which is a constitutional right, against the suffocating stay-at-home order by Gov. Murphy. State governments should bear their own losses as their own governors fail to protect constitutional rights while continuing these oppressive shutdowns.

Availability of early and preventive use of medication to guard against harm by the coronavirus would enable all states to safely open. Yet Democratic governors continue to block access to life-saving medication such as hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), and deny its use until a coronavirus victim is hospitalized near death and cannot be saved by any treatment.

Democratic Gov. Murphy has prohibited early access by requiring a positive test result on all prescriptions for HCQ, which many credit for helping them recover from COVID-19 if used early. A new study of 973 patients in France showed remarkably better results for patients who were given HCQ as an early treatment along with azithromycin.

The researchers conclude that HCQ medication "is a safe and efficient treatment for COVID-19," yet it remains blocked for millions of Americans exposed to or infected by the virus.

Nursing home residents are sitting ducks for this virus as they are denied this medication until they get too sick for any medication to help them.

Growing protests at state capitols illustrate how badly governors, mostly Democrats, have handled this crisis. President Trump himself has expressed support for the protesters, and has voiced his own objections to the ongoing interference with our economy by Democratic governors.

Meanwhile, non-coronavirus patients are being denied medical procedures and treatments which they need. Health care workers are being laid off throughout the country because ordinary medical care has been prohibited by the shutdown orders.

Massive bailouts to hospitals send them money for not being available to the public. These create the wrong incentive of perpetuating the shutdowns rather than allowing healthy economic pressure to force reopening.

President Trump could invoke his emergency powers to override state governors who interfere with our economy and block access to needed medical treatments. If we were in a conventional war, the president would prohibit interference by state officials with war-related efforts.

Yet some Democratic governors seem to be driven by ego rather than doing what is best for their residents. New York's Democratic Governor Andrew Cuomo is in a nasty spat with the Democratic Mayor Bill de Blasio of New York City over who gets to decide if public schools there will remain closed for the rest of the school year.

In 1992, Democratic Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida blocked efforts by President George H.W. Bush to help victims of Hurricane Andrew, which ravaged that state shortly before the presidential election. President Bush then stood down and was predictably blamed by the media for not doing more, when instead he should have overridden the politically motivated interference.

Today Democratic governors are determined to impede President Trump's helpful new guidelines for Opening Up America Again. Trump recommends reopening our Nation in three stages, depending on local conditions, and urges all 50 states to begin implementing Phase One immediately.

Trump's guidelines are merely recommendations, so Democrats have an election-year political incentive to undermine them as much as they can. Trump has repeatedly warned that the cure would be worse than the disease if "the greatest economy in the history of our country" is damaged beyond repair, but Democrats seem unconcerned.

Trump is working daily to restore the old normal, where Americans had no fear of crowding together in restaurants, bars, and sports stadiums. Federal funds should not be sent to Democratic governors who resist reopening.

John and Andy Schlafly are sons of Phyllis Schlafly (1924-2016) and lead the continuing Phyllis Schlafly Eagles organizations with writing and policy work.