**Florida Needs to Stay Open**

There has been a lot of speculation regarding the governor’s possible implementation of a second lockdown in the state of Florida. We are all well aware of the financial crisis that came to Florida with the original lockdown (with unemployment levels at 13.8% in April). This state relies on tourism and travel far more than some states, and it is vital that we continue with our current level of commerce (with only 6.4% unemployment in December).

We, along with all of the other responsible businesses in the state, have taken a variety of steps to ensure the safety of our guests and employees. We have implemented social distancing, required masks, put new cleaning processes in place, and even limited occupancy of restaurants, lodging, and parks. These processes have had the effect of “flattening the curve” as so many people preached early in the pandemic.

Our tourist and travel industry is still running at a limited volume. If we turn back the clock to April 2020, particularly without the Federal financial assistance which was provided in the short-term at that time, the businesses which provide livelihoods to thousands of Floridians may never recover.

The numbers show that the steps we are taking are working. The disease is not as deadly as many fear, but it is vital that everyone continues to follow the directions of the CDC as we continue on this course.

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