

I am happy and fortunate to inform you that I have recovered from COVID-19.

Before this good news, however, I spent 7 days in the Intensive Care Unit of Morristown Medical Center to get treatment and insure this good result for me and my family. I want to thank the doctors and nurses for their skillful and compassionate care. I want to thank the manufacturers of Remdesivir and the Eli Lilly monoclonal anti-body cocktail for giving me access to their extraordinary treatments. I am confident that all of those factors contributed to my good health today.

When you have seven days in isolation in an ICU though, you have time to do a lot of thinking. I did and have come to the following conclusions:

- I believed that when I entered the White House grounds, that I had entered a safe zone, due to the testing that I and many others underwent every day. I was wrong. I was wrong to not wear a mask at the Amy Coney Barrett announcement and I was wrong not to wear a mask at my multiple debate prep sessions with the President and the rest of the team. I hope that my experience shows my fellow citizens that you should follow CDC guidelines in public no matter where you are and wear a mask to protect yourself and others.
- Having had this virus, I can also assure those who have not had it of a few things. It is something to take very seriously. The ramifications are wildly random and potentially deadly. No one should be happy to get the virus and no one should be cavalier about being infected or infecting others. But as a former public official, I believe we have not treated Americans as adults, who understand truth, sacrifice and responsibility that I know them to be. I have also concluded that like much else in 2020, that the virus is governed by our two dominant political and media extremes: those who believe there is nothing to this virus and those alarmists who would continue to close down our country and not trust the common sense of the American people. Both are wrong. This is not an either/or proposition. The public health consequences of ignoring the virus and the responsible safeguards that we need to take will be additional illness and death caused by COVID-19. The public policy consequences of continuing to shut down or re-shut down our country will be further economic devastation to families, even more loss of education by our students and the continuing loss of life through the drug abuse, suicide and depression caused by taking away people's ability to support their families. There is another way.
- Every public official, regardless of party or position, should advocate for every American to wear a mask in public, appropriately socially distance and to wash your hands frequently every day. At the same time, we should be reopening in every corner of this nation under these guidelines. Reopen all those places which have taken the brunt of these shutdowns and allow our country to get back to a life where citizens can support their families using common sense. Even during a contentious election year, we must trust the American people with the truth. I believe that these two steps can bring our country together while our pharmaceutical companies invent the therapeutics and vaccines which will rid us of this virus.

While we may seem very divided today, I do believe we can use this public health tragedy to bring us together. It is never too late to start. It will take leadership that both challenges and trusts the American people. After all, we are America, the world's greatest hope.