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Lycoming County District Attorney Press Release for May 20, 2020:

Effective immediately, due to the recent uptick in violent crime and increased narcotic activity experienced throughout Lycoming County, the District Attorney's Office will not prosecute any business or business owner that chooses to violate Governor Wolf's re-opening restrictions. To help ensure the continued safety and welfare of all County residents, the allocation of this Office's resources must be applied to the prosecution of criminals engaged in violent and drug related activities.

Business owners who were required to initially close their doors due to the outbreak of COVID-19 and who now struggle with the decision whether to re-open for fear of prosecution falls far short of any criminal conduct that this Office is willing to expend resources to prosecute. Business owners in this position are not criminals and it is unfair to hang over their heads the threat of prosecution for violation of the Governor's orders to remain closed despite this County's recent "yellow" designation. The contributions of small business owners to the financial well-being of our community is beyond measure. For the reasons stated above, this Office will not contribute to the financial hardship committed upon countless small business owners, their families and employees due to these orders.

Accordingly, the District Attorney's Office has communicated to Lycoming County Law Enforcement that this Office does not condone the investigation or prosecution of any alleged violation of these orders. However, business owners choosing to open must be mindful of the Governor's ability to impose civil consequences that include the revocation of licenses, the imposition of fines and the ability to scrutinize state mandated insurance policies. Any civil sanction imposed by the Governor upon a business or business owner falls outside the jurisdictional scope of this Office.

Finally, despite our collective pursuit of returning to a state of normalcy, all residents and business owners should be cognizant of the fact that we all remain vulnerable to this virus and continue to strictly adhere to all CDC and PA Department of Health guidelines regarding social distancing, sanitation and utilization of personal protection equipment when required.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Ryan C. Gardner", is written over a horizontal line.

Ryan C. Gardner