



THE AMERICAN LEGION

For God and Country

May 14, 2020

Governor Ron DeSantis
Governor of the State of Florida
The Capitol
400 S. Monroe St.
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis,

You and I have something in common in that we are both elected into office. As you know from my previous letter, I represent over 100,000 American Legion members and support over 1.5 million veterans in the state of Florida. I write you today knowing you face many burdens with the current crisis but I also write knowing that you have staff making decisions that as well-intended as they seem at the moment, hurt others on many levels. As soon as The American Legion, Department of Florida was privy to your Executive Order we immediately supported your decision and reached out to our ~300 American Legion Posts within the state of Florida and echoed your message. Since that time, these facilities that support all of our veterans across this great state have been closed and awaiting news of being able to reopen. Under a constant barrage of questions and ridicule from some that don't understand or want to understand, we have held the line with reinforcing your orders.

Within the last few days, we have been privy to a memorandum released in which Craft Breweries throughout the state have been allowed to reopen provided they serve food to include if they bring in a food truck dedicated to their business. It is going to be a bit harder to answer the mail on this one. These posts have done everything right. Of the American Legion Posts that have a canteen (bar) on-premises, most if not all of them serve some food as well. It would seem that these facilities, which cater to limited membership anyway, would be afforded the same opportunity as any other similar facilities throughout the state.

Governor DeSantis, I implore you to review this policy and consider allowing our Veterans to get back to doing what they do best. Please allow them to open their posts. I write this particular letter on behalf of the 100,000 plus thousand members of The American Legion, Department of Florida; however, we are part of a larger coalition, The Florida Veterans Council. This was also a topic at our latest meeting we stand in support of all Veteran Service Organizations within the state of Florida. There have been flaws in our systems to support small businesses. Our posts are small businesses. Please allow us the opportunity to support our members while awaiting the outside support they so very much deserve.



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Governor, I hope you will consider this request and ensure we can provide the honor for our fellow veterans all across Florida. Thank you for listening to the plea of Florida's veterans.

For God and Country,

William "Rick" Johnson
Department Commander