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The rise of COVID-19 in the United States has shut down the economy as governments all across the nation are enforcing a stay-at-home order. According to “*Governor Says Resorts Worried Mayor’s comments will hurt Vegas*” written by Joe Schoenman (Schoenman), Nevada is struggling the most because it relies a lot on tourism. During an interview with CNN, Mayor Carolyn Goodman (Goodman) made controversial comments about an immediate reopening of the city in response to Nevada’s hurting economy. Goodman’s controversial comments called into question the leadership in Las Vegas and the economic future of it. (Schoenman)

Immediately, resort operators called Governor Steve Sisolak (Sisolak) worried that Mayor Goodman’s comment would affect the tourism industry. During the KNPR program, Governor Sisolak expressed his disagreement on Mayor Goodman’s portrayal of the situation in Las Vegas. He stated that Goodman clearly does not understand the implications of her comments. (Schoenman) Although Governor Sisolak disagrees with Mayor Goodman, Sisolak understands that people want to go back to work. Governor Sisolak also comments on the economic future of Las Vegas and his steps to recovery.

The biggest underlying issue is finding a balance between the health of the people and the economy. On one side, Mayor Goodman supports the immediate reopening of the city, using it as an experiment. This will help with the economy but will lead to the endangerment of lives. However, Governor Sisolak disagrees with reopening the city. Sisolak stated that he will not

allow people of the city to be used as guinea pigs. (Schoenman) Governor Sisolak also added that Mayor Goodman has no jurisdiction over the strip and very little control over the gaming industry within the city. He also stated that he is worried that people will take Mayor Goodman seriously because of her position in office. The issue of balancing highlighted the contrast in leadership from the Mayor vs. the Governor.

Schoenman questions Governor Sisolak on the issue of how Las Vegas will recover from the pandemic. Sisolak responded by clarifying the statistics of the Covid-19 positive tests. He stated many of the tests came back positive because the people who took the test were at an already high risk of exposure or were showing symptoms. According to Sisolak, expanding state testing will lower the percentage of positive cases. (Schoenman) Rather than allowing the percentage of positive tests to rise even more, Governor Sisolak is focusing on hospitalization and intensive care units. Sisolak states those are the numbers that need to be decreased.

The issue of contrast in leadership from the Mayor vs. the Governor becomes more apparent when Schoenman questions Governor Sisolak on when to reopen the city. As mentioned before, Mayor Goodman wanted to reopen the city. However, health experts speculate that it is not safe to reopen the city until June or later. (Schoenman) Governor Sisolak stated the idea of reopening the city is a balancing act. Sisolak stated people can only be out of work and isolated for so long. Eventually, we have to start phasing back to normal. Governor Sisolak suggested slowly opening the city rather than opening it quickly by opening certain parts of the city such as recreational activities first. Following that, other businesses can begin to open up with social distancing measures in place.

Another issue Governor Sisolak mentions is the major revenue shortages caused by the closure. No one knows for sure how long the revenue shortages will last said Governor Sisolak.

Sisolak also mentions that revenue shortages may continue even though businesses will slowly open up. For example, even if restaurants open up, we are unsure if people would even go to the restaurant. Some people would rather not take that risk, said Sisolak. (Schoenman) This can pose a problem for a city that relies on tourism and hospitality. Sisolak stated that the gaming tax right now is zero. In Nevada, the two major sources of revenue are gaming and sales tax. It pays for the schools, public safety, and roads.

Another topic mentioned in the program was federal aid. Sisolak said many people are facing unemployment and revenue shortages. Therefore, the federal government will have to assist states during the pandemic. Conversely, Senate Majority Leader Mitchell McConnell stated that blue-collar states such as Nevada should go bankrupt. Fortunately for Nevada, the federal government gave the state \$1.25 billion. Similar to block grants, it was to be used on items and programs related to Covid-19. Sisolak stated that the money can not be used to fill revenue holes and budget cuts but it can be used for healthcare. Nevada's health and mental healthcare are seen as a weakness.

With the aid, Nevada can improve its medical care, mental health care, and reimbursing public safety. The federal aid in response to Covid-19 could be a silver lining amidst the pandemic. (Schoenman)

Bibliography

Schoenmann, Joe. "Governor Says Resorts Worried Mayor's Comments Will Hurt Vegas."

Nevada Public Radio, 88.9 KNPR, knpr.org/knpr/2020-04/governor-says-resorts-worried-mayors-comments-will-hurt-vegas.