*Dear Mayor Piko,

I urge you to support Arapahoe County Commissioner Jeff Baker and his support of Constitutional freedoms for Centennial Residents.

Sincerely,*

Dear Editor:

Over the last few months, during our Public Meetings held on various Tuesday mornings, we have heard from a number of speakers, some repeat speakers, addressing the five-member Board of County Commissioners about the Tri-County Health Department and the public health order that mandated masks be worn by children in schools.

All of the speakers were opponents of the public health order and many were citizens who spoke out against the TCHD leadership in general. There have been hundreds of emails each week as well – most of them opposing the public health order and TCHD in general – although a few of the emails were supportive of TCHD and the mask order. This has also been newsworthy since the media has extensively reported the moves by our neighbors to the north and south, Adams and Douglas counties, which have announced their intent to leave the TCHD at the end of December 2022.

Most emails and speakers on Tuesday mornings have urged Arapahoe County Commissioners to do the same thing. My intent with this statement is to respond to these citizens and the media, which is now asking for Arapahoe County to go on the record and has specifically asked for a conservative view of the matter. We have traditionally worked behind the scenes with our fellow commissioners to serve the best interests of our taxpaying citizens. What prompted this statement are comments from citizens that our silence signifies agreement with the public health order and support of the TCHD governance – the Board of Health – that directed it.

Both Commissioner Nancy Sharpe and I were the only commissioners to publicly state that we would have voted to opt out of the school mask public health order.  We both went outside the County Admin building to speak with folks that were protesting and stating their opposition to the school mask order. The Board of Health then pulled that rug out from underneath us by removing that option that the other two counties were allowed to vote on. With Grinch-like timing, this same Board of Health November 22 issued another unenforceable public health order mandating masks (effective Nov. 24) despite opposition from local government officials, including two commissioners.  We urge the Board of Health, specifically the Arapahoe County Board of Health members, to simply stop damaging what little is left of TCHD. You have destroyed an organization that usually does very good work promoting the good health of our citizens. In my view, the Board of Health is similar to a toothless Chihuahua who growls and barks but is unable to bite.

I’d like to address the business folks in Arapahoe County. You are in the business of selling food, goods or providing services. There are no mask police! This newest order is unenforceable by TCHD. They are trying to force you to be the mask police in their place. They are asking you to limit your customers to certain people and reject business from certain other people. I urge you to remember your role in society, what you learned by running a business and marketing a business. Don’t allow yourself to move from your core business to being an arm of the government.

To the fine worker bees in TCHD, you also can stop the Board of Health from hurting your families, neighbors and friends. It is time for civil disobedience. If you choose to comply with the order, that is fine.  But if you choose to instead ***not*** be coerced into being an arm of the government, I will stand with you.  Contact me to learn more about TCHD’s impotence in enforcing the order.

–Arapahoe County Commissioner Jeff Baker