

We, the undersigned, petition the County Legislature to engage in active steps to protect the civil liberties of the citizens of _____ County

The right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness are birth rights of American Citizens endowed by our Creator. From these endowed rights flows the rights to assemble, speak, worship, petition the government for redress of grievances, to keep and bear arms, to possess and use private property, and to pursue one's livelihood without restrictions on mobility and travel. To preserve these rights, Americans voluntarily give certain powers to the government. The power of the government is to be limited. Civil liberties cannot be taken away or diminished by the government without due process of law. When the government takes it upon itself to restrict freedoms using the argument of a "compelling state interest" (as it has done this past year) it must do so under the standard of "strict scrutiny." This means it is to use the most narrowly tailored and least restrictive means possible to achieve the interest that is so compelling. Does "least restrictive" describe the actions of the government over this past year? Has the original compelling state interest of "flattening the curve" been achieved? If yes, why are civil liberties yet curtailed?

We the People are being forced to walk a path toward authoritarianism. Those who dismiss this claim believe the restrictions implemented to mitigate the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic were done so with good intent and for a temporary season. But we assert that the consequences of what were packaged as mitigation techniques either were or have become tools in the hands of tyrants.

It is our contention that between an authoritarian state and *We the People* stand two entities: law enforcement (in particular, county sheriffs) and legislatures.

We acknowledge that county legislators have been placed in a difficult position. You, too, are encountering the cruelty of a growing authoritarian state. Both the elected and unelected autocrats and bureaucrats at the state and federal level – use you as pawns to enforce their orders. Like us, you are expected to do what you are told or suffer the consequences. Dissent and rigorous debate – hallmarks of a democratic republic – are not only discouraged but refused. We acknowledge that in addition to the coercion put upon you from the power of Albany and Washington, you also face the pressure of citizens who have fallen fearfully in line with the orders from above. *We the People* contend that a situation such as this requires not that you bend to the pressure, but rather that you rise to the occasion. Instead of viewing your role as that of enforcement arm of Albany and Washington and comforter of the fearful citizen, you have both the opportunity and duty to remember your proper role: leader and legislator, a voice of reason in a time of irrationality. It is incumbent upon you to lead, not follow, in times like these. To remember, not forget, that the role of a local legislature is to be on the front lines of protecting and preserving the liberties enshrined in our Founding Documents. **It is you – our county legislators – to which we now turn and to whom we plea: take the position of true protector of the civil liberties of *We the People*.**

The "new normal" forced upon us and you has led us to a place of less freedom, not more. It has ushered in more fear, not less. The "new normal" is a societal structure in which everything we do is inspected – and either approved or denied – by the government. **Every citizen who resides in your county is obligated to interact with the state and its mandates on a daily basis. And every citizen who resides in your county faces potential negative consequences at the hand of that same state should they fail to interact in the prescribed manner. The governed now live at the consent of the government, a government which extends – or denies – permissions to the people.** *We the People* face the scrutiny – daily - of a surveillance state. This same surveillance state, in the name of health and safety, has pitted citizen against citizen, communicating to those who comply that they are moral and those who question are not. Around the corner of "new normal" stalks an entity called, "vaccine passport." Should the government impose upon *We the People* such a heavy-handed mandate, it will represent the final blow to the battered Constitution. A vaccine passport will restrict the mobility and the right of citizens of the United States of America to participate in the marketplace. Whether it is implemented directly by the government or indirectly by the businesses and corporations that have been intimidated by that same government is irrelevant. The bottom line remains the same: the constitutional liberties, civil rights, and privacy of a once free people shall be terminated should vaccine passports become the "new normal" requirement. It will not matter if a citizen possesses or does not possess the passport. In both cases, the civil liberties of each will be lifeless.

