



## Think before you coronavirus curfew and other commentary

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### **Libertarian: Think Before You Curfew**

Public officials, like the governors of New York and California, are ordering lockdowns and curfews amid the coronavirus outbreak, but, warns Reason's Matt Welch, it's "worth thinking this stuff through a bit more." Welch cites several "commonsense" concerns about such restrictions, even beyond whether they're constitutional and their "massive economic impact." First, they create shortages: The more people and industries locked down, "the more supply chains get broken" and "the fewer goods are available." By "compressing the commercial day," you also force more people to shop together "in close quarters." And remember: "Human beings do not have a limitless capacity for self-imprisonment." Welch hopes folks "mostly stay the hell away from each other" — but not in a way that creates "even worse pathways for unhealthy behavior."

### **Labor desk: End the War on Freelancers**

The crisis has "made trucking and home delivery uniquely important, fractured schedules for parents and caregivers and sent the services sector reeling," observes Walter Olson at Cato. So "it would be nice" if states like California and New Jersey "were not making war on the work arrangements needed for the situation" — via laws like California's AB5, "aimed at outlawing some independent contractor arrangements, common in trucking, entertainment and app-related 'gig economy' work," and forcing others into a "New Deal-style employer-will-provide-for-you model" meant to be "more amenable to stringent regulation and unionization." In California, the law has already caused "major disruptions," at the "worst conceivable time." Yes, there are "many more problems than this" at the moment, but ending the war on freelancers shouldn't "slip off the list."

### **Culture critic: US's Secret Weapon vs. Coronavirus**

Yes, the United States "will be hit hard by the coronavirus" — but, Henry Olsen argues at The Washington Post, Americans have "a secret weapon that will lessen the health impact: the way we live." Health experts "are pushing social distancing" to reduce the virus' spread, but Americans are already "less likely to be in close quarters with strangers during their daily lives than are residents of most other developed countries." Americans are also "significantly younger than other nations" and "much less likely to live with older people" — reducing the risk of spread of a disease that "is most fatal to the elderly." Don't take the epidemic lightly, but see that we "may stand a better chance than other nations at avoiding the high infection and death rates that dominate today's headlines."

### **Health watch: A Self-Isolated Doctor's Grief**

Canadian physician Michael Wansbrough has extensive experience with viruses and “communicable diseases epidemiology.” Still, he recounts at The Globe and Mail, he felt his “life had been turned upside down” when the Toronto Public Health board said he had to start “exclusion — a scary-sounding euphemism for self-isolation.” He “decamped to the basement,” only seeing his family at meals, where he sat “at the far end of the dining table.” During his isolation, he “went through different states, similar to the stages of grief” but eventually accepted his plight. “I emerged from quarantine with a greater appreciation of the importance of protecting not only myself and family but also my patients and their families.” The consequences of “complacency” carry “too high a cost.”

### **Foreign desk: Blame the ChiComs for COVID-19**

“The World Health Organization and other sensitive souls have instructed us to stop referring to the new strain of coronavirus as the ‘Wuhan’ or ‘Chinese’ flu because of the racist connotations,” David Harsanyi writes at National Review. But why “placate Chinese propagandists”? OK, to not disparage “an entire nation,” Harsanyi will happily call it “the ChiCom Flu,” referring to the Chinese Communists. Diseases, after all, are often named after the person or places linked to their discovery. And “scientists have been reporting for years that the eating of exotic animals in southern China is a ‘time bomb.’” No, it’s not the Chinese people who are the problem — but it’s definitely the ChiComs.