

An open letter to all elected officials representing all or part of the Niagara Region;

This has gone too far. The hospitality industry has been leveraged for political posturing too many times and for far too long. We were the first to get shut down, when no evidence or statistics even existed, we are the first to get punished still. Is it the lack of unified voice that makes us such an easy target? That ends today.

Every time Covid cases surge, politicians believe that they must immediately make public statements to appear in control. These statements always imply new restrictions, or the threat of more restrictions. We will discuss later that the threats are just as damning for business as the restrictions.

It is elected officials jobs to defend and represent their constituents. I have seen very little of that for months. Elected officials, afraid to look inept are being led around by medical officers as opposed to the other way around. Exhibit A, Dr, Hiriji. As elected officials you are tasked to collect as much information as possible, and in the light of all of it, make decisions that are in the best interest of everyone. I can go on about the importance of controls and safety of everyone, but that case is being argued well already, this is not that conversation.

There is a lack of substantiated evidence to indicate that restaurants are making the situation worse. Do you know what these closures are doing though? Unemployment, poverty, debt, food insecurity, bankruptcy, mental health issues..... where are the defenders for these causes? These aren't even being discussed by almost anyone. This is a not just a problem but an epic tragedy as public figures race to be on a popular side of specific arguments to play it safe.

I am aware of the Dr.'s legal right to make this decision, but let's be very clear! It is your job to represent US. Someone needs to take a stand. Combined, you (the recipients of this letter) can figure out how to stop this, and don't act like you can't. If you don't believe you can influence this decision, you are either ignorant, a liar, or just in the wrong field. It is your job to effect change in policy and legislation for the betterment of your people. WE ARE YOUR PEOPLE. I would like to thank the MPP's for sending a letter to Ford, I will assume a joint letter is just the beginning of your support, as words mean little and passing the buck to the province for a Niagara Region issue is weak at best.

A smaller collective of concerned and affected businesses have already sought legal council to file an injunction and possibly a class action suit against the Dr. and the Region. Before you shrug, I don't expect we could win, but we will ruin some reputations along the way.

The provinces new system needs some tuning but we will deal with the province on that topic. Today we are discussing the narcissistic abuse of section 22. I am asking immediately for Dr. Hirji's resignation and that he stop at every restaurant as he leaves the Niagara Region and apologize for his abuse of power and lack of empathy for the people he has caused unnecessary loss and stress to in an already unprecedented year of loss and suffering. The collective is asking for the immediate rescinding of the region's new legislation. I will continue to ramp up

public support for this and hold you individually responsible for non-support and complacency of this situation.

This letter was prefaced by a partial list of the businesses I speak for now, the 1000's of people they employ, and the hundreds of thousands of voting taxpayers we call regulars and friends.

Complacency is not an option for you at this point. Collectively we will demand acknowledgement and action in such a manner that you simply cannot ignore. I am proud to be the voice for a newly unified group of successful entrepreneurs and all around great people. We will stay unified now thanks to this travesty and never again will we let our industry take one on the chin over a lack of unified voice.

Sincerely, Woodzy
Mark Bruce Wood
Niagara Restaurants United