

# Report on the 2020 Session Op-Ed

REPRESENTATIVE ROD  
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Facts vs. Opinions. One of the downfalls of our digital society is that an abundance of information is at our fingertips every moment of every day. That's good, because it means we don't have to rely on a select few to keep us informed, but it can also be bad because we all tend to take all the news that we see and hear as fact, when in reality a large share of it is just opinions. Don't get me wrong; each person should be allowed his own opinions, but we MUST learn to discern between opinions and facts.

One fact about the COVID 19 virus that you won't hear on the news is that it is acting like every other known virus. Professor Yitzhak Ben Israel of Tel Aviv University, who also serves on the research and development advisory board for Teva Pharmaceutical Industries, plotted the rates of new coronavirus infections of the U.S., U.K., Sweden, Italy, Israel, Switzerland, France, Germany, and Spain. And guess what? He found that no matter the politics of the nation, the coronavirus peaked and subsided in the exact same way. In the *exact same way*. The number of infected persons peaked in the sixth week and rapidly subsided by the eighth week. THAT is why we've seen the number of hospitalizations going down starting around April 1<sup>st</sup>, NOT because of all of the government mandated restrictions. In fact, it's quite probable that these restrictions may have extended the length of the outbreak because people weren't out being exposed and developing immunity to it.

Dr John A Lee, a recently retired professor of pathology and NHS consultant pathologist, has also studied the effectiveness of quarantining. He said, "As far as I can see, Sweden, despite not having anywhere near as severe a lockdown as we have had, actually has a very similar curve to ours. And Sweden's death rate per hundred thousand people is roughly half of ours at the moment. So, it is not a given that what we are doing is either working or is having all the right effects." Sweden and Michigan have about the same populations. Sweden, for the most part, has allowed its people to go about business as usual. To use their own common sense to protect the vulnerable around them. Michigan, on the other hand, arguably has the most restrictive guidelines in use. Guess what? Michigan has suffered approximately 1000 more deaths than Sweden from the corona virus. But you won't hear THAT in the news!

The usefulness of face masks to stop the spread of the virus has also been way overstated. Obviously, they are useful in some environments to keep from spreading the virus to someone else. But they rarely, if ever, protect the wearer from contracting the virus. I have to chuckle when I see news reporters in an outside environment, with no one closer than 10-15 feet to them, wearing a mask. Who are they supposed to be protecting? Or is it really more about spreading the fear? I'm hoping that as the governor begins to lift more restrictions, we will all be able to discern between facts and opinions. Between caution and fear.

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