



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on May 19, 2020

New Jersey Governor Says Gym Owners Will Face “Different Reality” if They Reopen Today

When New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy was asked on Monday afternoon whether the “situation” at Atilis Gym in Bellmawr could spiral “out of control,” [he responded](#),

I’m not concerned it will spiral out of control. If it does, we will take action.

If you show up at that gym tomorrow, there will be a different reality than showing up today. These aren’t just words. We also have to enforce this.

But I also don’t want to start World War III. I’m not worried about that right now ... people are doing the right thing ... because they’re smart.



After the owners of Atilis Gym announced that they were going to open on Monday in spite of the governor’s “stay-at-home” edict, hundreds showed up. Members were allowed to enter after having their temperatures taken and signing “social distancing” and health compliance forms provided by the gym. Hundreds of others filled the parking lot out front, waving American flags and verbally cheering the defiant reopening.

When Bellmawr police showed up, they announced to the crowd that they were in violation of the governor’s order: “We have come to advise you that you’re in violation of an executive order. We are and were always here for everyone’s safety. We planned for the worst and hoped for the best and that’s what we have here today. Formally you are all in violation of the executive order.”

And then, as they turned to leave, the officer in charge said: “On that note, have a good day. Everybody be safe.”

Co-owner Frank Trumbetti expressed relief: “I was prepared for the worst and hoping for the best. That was better than the best. They told us that we were in violation of an executive order and [to] have a good day. They protected and served the people.”

The police returned later in the day to cite the owners for violating Murphy’s mandate.

What about Tuesday? Said Trumbetti: “We finish working today and reopen tomorrow, and we’ll keep doing it right and open up the day after that and we encourage everyone to do the same thing. The constitution is there to restrain the government, not the citizens.”

And then he provided a lesson: “No matter what happens, we won. [I’m] not sure if New Jersey State Police will show up.... Everyone will understand nationally and locally will know where the order came from, because people in our community believe we’re doing the right thing. The pandemic isn’t killing us, the government is.”

The owners had sent a letter to Governor Murphy last week announcing their plans to open on Monday, and told CBS Philly why: “Everything we’re doing is constitutional and it’s our rights and we’ve not broken any laws.... An executive order isn’t a law, anyway.”



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Courts around the country are agreeing with them. On Monday, Baker County (Oregon) Circuit Judge Matthew Shirtcliff ruled that Governor Kate Brown's executive orders to "stay at home" were "null and void." He wrote that "the governor's orders are not required for public safety when plaintiffs can continue to utilize social distancing and safety protocols at larger gatherings."

Last week, the Wisconsin Supreme Court struck down Governor Tony Evers' stay-at-home order, ruling that his administration had overstepped its authority when it extended the order for another month without obtaining approval from the legislative branch of the government.

Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer is being sued for similar encroachments on civil liberties. Last week, U.S. District Judge Gregory Van Talenhove issued a temporary restraining order against Kentucky Governor Andy Beshear's overreach banning in-person church services.

California Governor Gavin Newsom is facing more than a dozen lawsuits challenging his egregious overreach closing business and beaches. Business owners in Maine are suing Maine Governor Janet Mills' "shelter-in-place" orders.

Governors in Maryland and Ohio are facing similar lawsuits.

In speaking about Michigan Governor Whitmer's overreach, Judge Andrew Napolitano spoke for every citizen: "This is a blatant violation of the Bill of Rights, a blatant violation of freedom of assembly, of your right to purchase a product that you decide is essential. These are not decisions for the government to make. These are decisions for individuals to make. And the sooner we take our freedoms back, the less likely the government will be able to continue doing this."

Whether New Jersey Governor Murphy has gotten the memo that he is violating precious rights will be seen in his reaction as the owners of Atilis Gym reopen on Tuesday morning.



Image: [nathaphat/iStock/Getty Images Plus](#)

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