

Communication from Public

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Comments for Public Posting: I am a resident of Calabasas writing to express my deep concern about the mask ban Mayor Bass has proposed for protestors in LA. I was absolutely appalled to hear her remarks on this matter. Masks are considered medical devices by the FDA. Legislation aiming to criminalize and politicize A medical device would be a shameful infringement upon bodily autonomy and personal rights. Banning masks in any capacity would harm countless individuals including the disabled, chronically ill, immunocompromised and elderly communities, as well as Black folks, Indigenous folks and people of the global majority, who have experienced disproportionate amounts of harm in the ongoing pandemic due to systemic and medical racism. A mask ban in any form will also fuel discrimination, bullying and even violence towards folks wearing masks in non-protest settings, which in turn will further isolate disabled and vulnerable people from society. Furthermore, the First Amendment protects people's right to assemble peacefully, as well as freedom of speech. Banning masks for protestors would be an extremely ableist violation of First Amendment rights for disabled and vulnerable people, and would serve to push them out of the public sphere. It's not just disabled people who would experience the effects of this decision. COVID very much still exists and is not only still killing people (over 31,000 so far this year alone in the US) but long COVID can affect anyone and becomes more likely to be developed with each reinfection. We are seeing COVID rates rising in wastewater around the country this summer, along with hospitalizations. Additionally, people need to be able to wear masks to protect themselves from other airborne viruses, allergens, smoke and pollution. Everyone deserves the autonomy to be able to mask, Disabled or not. As the City Council of Los Angeles, you all have a responsibility to your constituents' wellbeing. You should be doing everything possible to make sure that Los Angeles is as safe and accessible as possible for all, which should include encouraging masking, especially amidst a COVID surge like the one we are experiencing now. Masking certainly should not be criminalized, regardless of circumstance. I'm calling on you to do all that you can to deter any type of mask ban from being implemented. Thank you for your time. Sincerely, Mr Qash