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END SOCIAL DISTANCING MANDATES

Form policy according to rational risk assessment, says 1889 Institute.

OKLAHOMA CITY, OK (November 16, 2020) – In [a paper](#) published by the 1889 Institute, Steve Trost, Associate Director, Institute for the Study of Free Enterprise at Oklahoma State University, argues for an end to social distancing mandates amid the COVID-19 epidemic. He says that “The time has come for state and local government officials and governmental institution leaders to apply solid risk management principles to their policymaking.”

Trost’s proposal strikes a balance between liberty and safety and is similar to what the 1889 Institute has recommended since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. If adopted, this policy would aggressively shield the vulnerable. Meanwhile, most of the population, which is far less vulnerable, would interact almost normally, socially and economically. Those that need, or merely want, protection would get it. Those that would like to get back to life as usual would be free to do so. Specifically, state, local and governmental-institution policy-makers should create a framework for focused protection by taking the following actions:

- Make N95 respirators (or their equivalents) available to all vulnerable individuals;
- Encourage self-quarantine only for individuals manifesting symptoms;
- Establish and enforce policies that “protect vulnerable members of the population who rely upon non-family support, such as those in assisted living facilities”;
- Facilitate innovation among community organizations to assist those who must be isolated; and
- Repeal all current, universally applied, social distancing mandates.

“Under this proposed policy, the dichotomy between individual liberty and our health, safety and welfare can be eliminated. We can achieve both,” said Byron Schlomach, director of the 1889 Institute.

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About the 1889 Institute

The 1889 Institute is an Oklahoma think tank committed to independent, principled state policy fostering limited and responsible government, free enterprise and a robust civil society. The publication, “Make Social Distancing Restrictions Voluntary” and other reports can be found on the nonprofit’s website at www.1889institute.org.