

McKinley County commissioners reverse themselves

Written by gallupsun
Tuesday, 21 April 2020 10:42

An online McKinley County commissioner's meeting held April 20 addressed an ordinance restricting liquor sales and encouraging people to stay home between 8 pm and 5 am.

Ordinance 2020-April-002, established April 13, called for banning the sale of certain alcohol products and urging citizens to self-curfew between 8 pm and 5 am.

McKinley County Undersheriff James Maiorano III compared the response to the ordinance to a balloon full of water. If you push it, the water just moves to another place, in the case of people looking for alcohol in the county, it means moving from convenience stores to grocery stores and from McKinley County to a neighboring county.

There was a single public oral comment recorded, in which the commissioners heard from a man who said the self-curfew ordinance had no teeth and compared it to suggesting his teenager not use the car.

After the comment was heard, the commissioners took up the topics of restricting liquor sales, imposing a curfew and the issue of wearing masks, and imposing penalties.

District 3 Commissioner Bill Lee brought back the water balloon analogy, saying wherever you squeeze, something's going to come out the other side. He said Cibola County authorities called April 15 to ask what McKinley County was doing.

"I don't think our recommended ban of the hard liquor is working," he said. If we're forcing people into another county, we're maybe increasing the spread of this virus."

District 1 Commissioner Billy Moore pointed out that the Navajo Nation had implemented a mask rule. He called it common sense.

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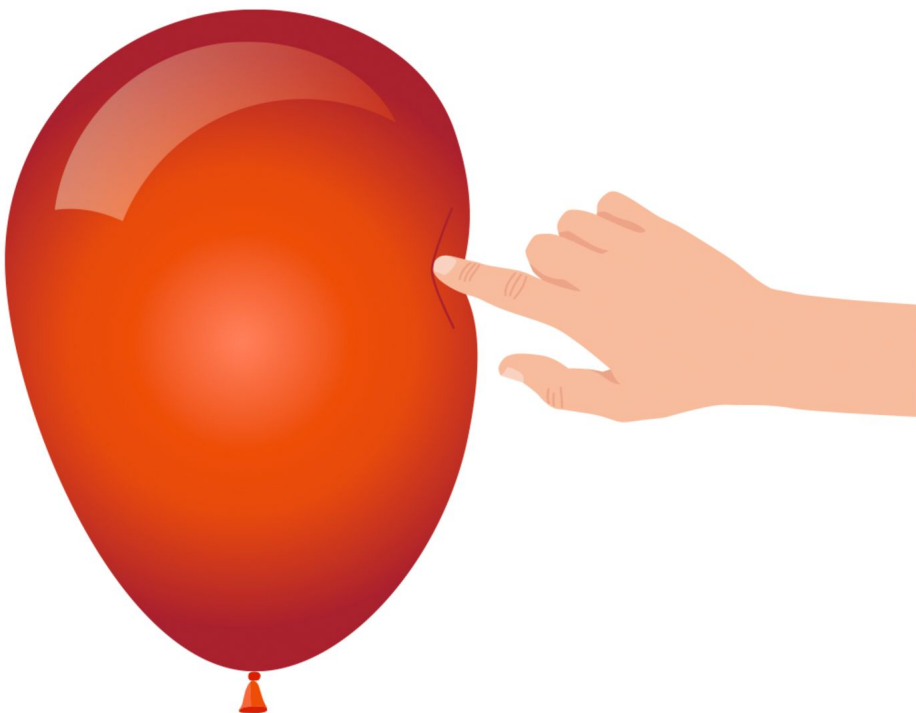
“But how are we going to enforce that?” he asked. “We can encourage them to do what’s right, but getting them to do it, that’s another thing.”

Lee agreed with Moore.

“I think that’s all that we can do, is ask the people [to] do the right thing. We’re already looking at things that have impeded everybody’s way of life,” Lee said. “I’m not sure that enacting any kind of curfew or wearing of masks is going to do any good.”

District 2 Commissioner Tommy Nelson offered no comment.

Lee made a motion that the commission rescind the restrictions in the ordinance and open liquor sales back up.



Nelson seconded the motion.

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