

Dear Mayor Hogsett,

My name is Ava Lowry and I was supposed to be graduating from high school this year, but will be unable to do so due to the pandemic. For my family graduating high school is something to be celebrated, but also to celebrate the fact that I will hopefully be a first generation college student. The success that I have achieved in my education is something I am extremely proud of. I will hopefully be attending a top 25 liberal arts college next year. This pandemic has been a constant state of worry for me. Originally, it was will I ever play my last lacrosse game? The answer is no. Will I get to have a graduation ceremony? Maybe. I was extremely heartbroken by these milestones that I am missing out on, but soon my focus shifted from worrying about these small milestones to worrying if I can afford college or even if my family will have anything left.

My dad is the owner of DL Lowry a large hair salon on 86th street, 5 minutes or 1.7 miles south of the Hamilton/Marion county line. He has been closed since March. No income since March. The majority of people who have lost their jobs due to the pandemic are individuals who do not have a college degree. Individuals who are in the service industry. You have stated that my dad, who was not college educated, cannot work. He is working to put his three children through college. By not allowing individuals in the service industry such as Hair Salons and Nail Salons not work, you are continuing the cycle of poverty and lack of opportunity. I have proved that I should be given the opportunity to attend college, however not allowing my dad to open his business is putting this opportunity in jeopardy. Hamilton county, one of the wealthiest counties in the nation, can work towards sending their children to college, but Marion county cannot. Soon, the hair salons in Marion county will lose business to the salons 1.7 miles north of DL Lowry because we need to "stop community transmission." I do agree that we need to stop community transmissions as much as possible, but this is a virus. Unfortunately, it is something that we will have to learn to live with. Hair salons go through hours of sanitation training and know how to keep their clientele safe. In addition, what happens in a hair salon is completely in the public eye. By this I mean, nothing is done behind the scenes. A hairstylist does not go back to the "kitchen" that their clients cannot see. Everything is done in front of the client. They are automatically held to a higher standard solely through public scrutiny. DL Lowry has planned to reopen multiple times and with that they have set measures in place to ensure that their clientele will be safe. They are planning to take temperatures of every individual who enters, require face masks, allow for proper social distancing measures by spreading out chairs, and sanitize everything. Sadly, this virus is something that we are going to have to learn to live with, so I am asking you to allow DL Lowry and the other salons to reopen on June 1st.

We have been told that we are "all in this together," however to deny the fact that southern Hamilton County and northern Marion County is one community is ignorant. That would state that my lacrosse team or my school is not a community since individuals live in a multitude of counties. People are taking the short 5-minute drive to Hamilton county to go to hair salons, nail salons, or to enjoy a restaurant. Please, do not be ignorant to this and consider the small businesses that are losing customers. I am asking you to be consistent. Throughout your time as mayor, you have been a large supporter of local businesses. Allowing the large, commercial malls that do not go through the same amount of sanitation training that salons and restaurants do is inconsistent with supporting local business. These small businesses are drowning and need to be allowed to reopen. The PPP loans are running out and many businesses cannot survive much longer. I am urging you to allow salons across Marion county to open on June 1st; they need it to put food on their families' tables and to give their children the opportunity to do more than they did.

Sincerely,

Ava Lowry