

STATE OF MINNESOTA
COUNTY OF FREEBORN

DISTRICT COURT
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT

Case Type: Civil

State of Minnesota, by its Attorney General,
Keith Ellison,

Court File No. 24-CV-20-1787

Plaintiff,

vs.

Triple Threat L.L.C. d/b/a The Pour House Bar
& Grill,

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF THE
STATE'S *EX PARTE* MOTION FOR
TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER
AND TEMPORARY INJUNCTION**

Defendant.

The State of Minnesota, by its Attorney General, Keith Ellison, (the "State"), pursuant to Minnesota Rules of Civil Procedure 6.04, 7.02(a), 65.01, and 65.02; Minnesota Statutes sections 8.31, subdivision 3, and Governor Tim Walz's Emergency Executive Order 20-99 as extended and modified by Executive Order 20-103, brings this *Ex Parte* Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order and Temporary Injunction against Defendant Triple Threat L.L.C. d/b/a The Pour House Bar & Grill (*hereinafter*, Pour House).

INTRODUCTION

In direct and knowing defiance of Governor Walz's Emergency Executive Order 20-99 and Executive Order 20-99 as extended and modified by Executive Order 20-103, which have the full force and effect of law during a declared peacetime emergency, Defendant Pour House has opened to the public for indoor on-premises consumption of food and beverages at its restaurant in Clarks Grove, Minnesota. In doing so, Defendant is not only violating the law but is also placing the public health and safety of its own community at risk to increased community

spread of COVID-19 at a time when confirmed COVID-19 cases in Minnesota generally, and Freeborn County where Defendant is located more specifically, are dangerously high. Restaurants and bars like Pour House—where individuals congregate unmasked for extended periods of time to eat and drink indoors—present substantial public health risks and are particularly fertile environments for the community spread of COVID-19. Accordingly, the Attorney General brings this action to enforce Emergency Executive Order 20-99 as extended and modified by Executive Order 20-103 (hereinafter, collectively, “Modified Executive Order 20-99”) to protect public health and safety of all Minnesota residents.

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

I. COMMUNITY SPREAD OF COVID-19 REPRESENTS ONE OF THE GREATEST PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES IN MINNESOTA’S HISTORY.

Minnesota’s fight against the COVID-19 virus represents one of the greatest public health emergencies this state has handled in its 162-year history. In part, the magnitude of Minnesota’s response reflects the uniquely virulent characteristics of the disease: in one study, researchers found that a single infected person likely spread the virus to 53 other people during the course of a single choir rehearsal.¹ Minnesota is fighting the pandemic, but the virus continues to spread, and the need for emergency preventative measures remains in order to protect public health and safety.

¹ Hammer et al., *High SARS-CoV-2 Attack Rate Following Exposure at a Choir Practice—Skagit County, Washington, March 2020*, 69 MORBIDITY & MORTALITY WEEKLY R. 16, 606-10 (May 15, 2020), available at, <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6919e6.htm>. Affidavit of Erin Conti (“Conti Aff.”), Exhibit 1.

COVID-19 kills people. In Minnesota alone, as of December 20, 2020, COVID-19 has already caused at least 4,719 deaths. 397,319 positive cases have been reported across the state with 28,826 of those positive cases reported in the first week of December alone.²

Minnesota is currently experiencing some of the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic. For example, it took Minnesota over 6 months to record its first 100,000 positive COVID-19 cases, but only 41 days to add an additional 100,000 new cases. Just 16 days later, Minnesota logged another 100,000 positive cases.³

In Freeborn County, at least 17 individuals have passed away due to COVID-19 and 1,859 have tested positive.⁴ Moreover, in Freeborn County, the 14-day case rate per 10,000 people has jumped dramatically from 31.45 for the reporting period of October 11, 2020 to October 24, 2020, to 92.38 for the reporting period of November 22, 2020 to December 5, 2020.⁵

In the months of November and December of 2020, Minnesota has been recording record numbers of daily new cases, hospitalizations, intensive care unit admissions, and deaths. Surging COVID-19 cases are pushing Minnesota's hospital system to a critical point.⁶ Due to unprecedented staffing shortages, many hospitals are diverting patients to other facilities and making difficult choices, like discharging patients that normally would have longer hospital

² *Situation Update for COVID-19, Updated December 21, 2020*, MINN. DEPT. OF HEALTH, <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/situation.html>. (Conti Aff., Ex. 2 at 17.)

³ Affidavit of Richard Danila ("Danila Aff.") ¶4.

⁴ See Conti Aff. Ex. 2 (County level data).

⁵ 14-day COVID-19 Case Rate by County (updated 12/17/2020), available at <https://www.health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus/stats/wschooll.pdf> (Conti Aff. Ex. 3.)

⁶ Howatt, Glen, New bar, restaurant and gym COVID-19 restrictions expected in Minnesota, MINNEAPOLIS STAR TRIB. (Nov. 18, 2020), available at <https://www.startribune.com/new-bar-restaurant-and-gym-restrictions-expected-in-minn/573107051/> (Conti Aff. Ex. 4.)

stays. Hospitals are running out of critical care beds that are a necessity for COVID-19 patients experiencing severe symptoms.⁷

COVID-19 can easily be spread through respiratory droplets exhaled into the air by individuals not wearing face coverings. The on-premises consumption of food and beverages at Minnesota bars and restaurants continues to pose substantial risks to public health and safety. (Danila Aff. at ¶11). Bars and restaurants pose a particularly high risk of COVID-19 transmission because they allow people to gather and congregate around people from different households to eat and drink without face coverings, often for extended periods of interaction. (*Id.*) Individuals cannot remain masked while they are eating and drinking, and many people leave their masks off in bars and restaurants while talking. (*Id.*) Bars and restaurants can be loud, leading to a larger volume of respiratory droplets in the air as people talk, raise their voices to be heard, or laugh. (*Id.*) Moreover, gathering with close friends or family can lower inhibitions and interfere with effective social distancing. (*Id.*) All of these factors make bars and restaurants high risk for the easy transmission of COVID-19. (*Id.*)

For example, one study examined COVID-19 transmission in a bar during a St. Patrick's Day celebration in Vietnam. (*Id.* at ¶12.) The study found that it was likely that a single person spread the virus to 18 other people over the course of a single night, even though only 4 of the 18 reported being in close contact with the infectious individual. (*Id.*)

In another study publicized by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ("CDC"), a significant viral outbreak occurred at a family gathering at a restaurant. (*Id.*, Ex. A.) Not only did the family members who attended the meal become ill, but other patrons

⁷ *Id.*

unassociated with the reunion became sick. (*Id.*) The researchers' hypothesis indicates that the virus was spread simply through the air of the restaurant. (*Id.*)

In yet another study, an outbreak of three cases occurred at a restaurant including one case who sat 21 feet away from the infector for only 5 minutes. (*Id.*)

An outbreak is generally defined as multiple cases of illness related by time and place in which an epidemiologic investigation suggests person-to-person transmission or contamination occurred. (*Id.* at ¶10.) It is challenging to document the full scope of any COVID-19 outbreak, by what is known as secondary and tertiary transmission of COVID-19. (*Id.*) This is because a person may have COVID-19 and be asymptomatic or experience mild symptoms and never get tested, but still be able to infect others. (*Id.*) And importantly, the contact tracing process relies on truthful and accurate self-reporting from persons infected or exposed to the virus. (*Id.*) If a person exposed to the virus does not fully disclose their symptoms, activities, or contacts, then the total numbers related to an outbreak will be underreported. (*Id.*) Because of these challenges, the total impact of outbreaks in Minnesota will never be fully known. (*Id.*) Instead, these documented outbreaks represent just the tip of the iceberg of transmission and there are likely many more cases from the outbreak source that haven't been identified. (*Id.*)

Minnesota Department of Health ("MDH")'s contact tracing investigations have shown that, apart from long-term care settings, bars and restaurants are a leading source of COVID-19 outbreaks in Minnesota. Specifically, MDH has already traced 448 COVID-19 outbreaks and 4,145 confirmed cases of COVID-19 to bars and restaurants in Minnesota. (*Id.* at ¶13.)

Minnesota has had success in keeping its infection rate and mortality count relatively lower than some other areas, in part through its outreach to educate Minnesotans on public health safety precautions, and in part by placing restrictions on activities that are more likely to result in

spread of the virus (e.g. large events and fully occupied restaurants with people from different households congregating in close proximity). Nevertheless, Minnesota is currently experiencing some of the highest numbers of COVID-19 cases since the beginning of the pandemic. Pursuant to his emergency authority, Governor Walz is acting to slow the spread of COVID-19 to protect the health and safety of Minnesotans. The restrictions imposed by Modified Executive Order 20-99 have been deemed necessary by the Governor to preserve public health throughout Minnesota, including in Freeborn County.

II. GOVERNOR WALZ ISSUED MODIFIED EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-99 TO TEMPORARILY PROHIBIT INDOOR ON-PREMISES DINING AT RESTAURANTS, BARS, AND TAVERNS IN ORDER TO LIMIT COMMUNITY SPREAD OF COVID-19.

On March 13, 2020, Governor Tim Walz declared a peacetime emergency as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. At its emergency meeting on March 16, the Executive Council of the State of Minnesota approved the peacetime emergency to protect Minnesotans from COVID-19.⁸ The peacetime emergency was most recently extended and approved by the Executive Council until at least through January 13, 2021, pursuant to Executive Order 20-100.⁹

In order to protect public health and safety by slowing the “community spread” of COVID-19, on November 18, 2020, Governor Walz issued Executive Order 20-99, which, in relevant part, ordered that “restaurants, . . . bars, . . . and other Places of Public Accommodation offering food, beverages (including alcoholic beverages), or tobacco products for on-premises consumption are closed to ingress, egress, use, and occupancy by member of the public, except

⁸ See Executive Order 20-99 at 2, available at <https://www.leg.mn.gov/archive/execorders/20-99.pdf>.

⁹ See Executive Order 20-100, available at [https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-100%20Final%20Signed%20and%20Filed tcm1055-458402.pdf](https://mn.gov/governor/assets/EO%2020-100%20Final%20Signed%20and%20Filed%20tcm1055-458402.pdf).

as set forth below.”¹⁰ Executive Order 20-99 added that restaurants and bars could “permit up to five members of the public at one time . . . for the purpose of picking up their food or beverage orders.”¹¹ All on-premises consumption was prohibited, as was any occupancy above five members of the public waiting for their orders, until at least December 18, 2020 at 11:59 p.m.

On December 16, 2020, Governor Walz issued Executive Order 20-103 which, in relevant part, extended Executive Order 20-99’s provisions, including Executive Order 20-99’s prohibition on indoor, on-premises consumption of food and beverage, and its enforcement provisions, to January 10, 2021.¹² In issuing Executive Order 20-103, Governor Walz noted improvements in Minnesota’s infection rate, due, in part to the restrictions of Executive Order 20-99, but Governor Walz also specifically considered the “alarming levels of community spread” of the virus.¹³ Modified Executive Order 20-99 prohibits indoor on-premises consumption of food and beverage at restaurants and bars like Defendant’s, but allows for outdoor on-premises consumption.¹⁴

Executive Orders 20-99 and 20-103 were promulgated by the Governor under the authority of Minnesota Statutes section 12.21, subdivision 3, clause (1), were approved by the Executive Council, and filed in the Office of the Secretary of State.¹⁵ Thus, pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 12.32, Executive Orders 20-99 and 20-103 have the full force and

¹⁰ Executive Order 20-99 ¶7.c.iii.A.

¹¹ *Id.* at ¶7.c.iii.A.1.

¹² Executive Order 20-103 ¶1.

¹³ *Id.* at 1.

¹⁴ *Id.* at ¶7.vi.

¹⁵ Executive Order 20-99. at 3; Executive Order 20-103 at 3.

effect of law during the peacetime emergency. Moreover, Modified Executive Order 20-99, authorizes the Attorney General to enforce its provisions and seek any relief available pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 8.31, “including civil penalties up to \$25,000 per occurrence from businesses and injunctive relief.” (*Id.* at ¶ 10.)

III. POUR HOUSE VIOLATED AND THREATENED TO VIOLATE MODIFIED EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-99.

Pour House has flagrantly violated Executive Order 20-99 and Modified Executive Order 20-99, and has threatened to continue violating Modified Executive Order 20-99. On Tuesday, December 15, 2020 at 9:21 a.m., Pour House posted to its public Facebook page a photo of its specials for the day. A customer asked, “What is the seating capacity per table? We have a family of 10. Would we be able to get a spot?” The Pour House moderator replied, “[W]e will post in morning 😊” (Conti Aff. Ex. 5 at 8.)

On December 17, 2020 at 8:23 a.m., The Pour House Facebook page lamented, “We, as business owners, should not have to feel like criminals” In response, several patrons commented about enjoying their dinners at the Pour House the previous night (December 16, 2020). One patron commented, “Dinner was great, thank you! A little disappointed that this song wasn’t playing, though.” Another stated, “It was nice getting a glimpse of being normal last night and we are glade [sic] we got to help support you[.]” (Conti Aff. Ex. 5 at 2-4.)

On December 18, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. Minnesota Department of Public Safety Alcohol and Gambling Enforcement (“DPS”) agents observed that the Pour House was open for business with a red neon “BEER” sign glowing. (Conti Aff. Ex. 6.) Agents saw multiple vehicles in the parking lot. (*Id.*) When agents returned at 5:00 p.m., they saw patrons inside consuming beverages in glass bottles. (*Id.*) At 6:30 p.m., the Albert Lea Director of Public Safety received notice that Pour House was at “full capacity.” (*Id.*) DPS subsequently wrote to Pour House on

December 19 to inform the bar that DPS would be seeking to suspend the bar’s liquor license for 60 days. (*Id.*)

On December 17 and 19, 2020, the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office received multiple complaints from citizens regarding the Pour House being open for on-premises sale of food and beverages. One individual noted Pour House was open and serving with “no regard for closure, masking or social distancing.” (Conti Aff. Ex. 7.) The complaint included a photo showing crowds inside the Pour House eating and drinking without masks:



On Saturday, December 19, 2020, after receiving more than a dozen complaints about Pour House’s operations, the Minnesota Department of Health sent an inspector to observe Pour House. (Conti Aff. Ex. 8.) The inspector observed 7-10 cars in the parking lot. (*Id.*) He saw people drinking at the bar through the window. (*Id.*)

Governor Walz’s Emergency Executive Orders 20-99 and 20-103 were issued to slow the community spread of COVID-19 and thereby protect public health and safety. (Danila Aff., ¶

14.) This includes, in part, requiring settings that are especially high risk for the easy transmission of COVID-19 from person to person and out into the community to temporarily close to on-premises dining and restrict entry by members of the public to protect the public's health and safety. Without such restrictions, the dangerous public health emergency Minnesota is currently facing would continue to worsen, threatening the health, safety, and lives of Minnesotans. Attorney General Keith Ellison has authority to enforce Modified Executive Order 20-99, and brings this action to enjoin and remediate Pour House's violations described herein.

ARGUMENT

I. A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER AND A TEMPORARY INJUNCTION ARE APPROPRIATE TO ENJOIN POUR HOUSE FROM VIOLATING MODIFIED EXECUTIVE ORDER 20-99.

Temporary injunctive relief should be issued upon a showing by the State that Pour House “has violated, or is about to violate” Modified Executive Order 20-99 and when injunctive relief would fulfill the purpose of the Order. *See State v. Cross Country Bank, Inc.*, 703 N.W.2d 562, 572 (Minn. Ct. App. 2005) (quoting *Wadena Implement Co. v. Deere & Co., Inc.*, 480 N.W.2d 383, 389 (Minn. Ct. App. 1992)); accord *State v. Minn. School of Business, Inc.*, 899 N.W.2d 467, 471-72 (Minn. 2017) (recognizing “[t]he conditions that must be met to grant a statutory injunction are determined by the text of the statute authorizing the injunction.”).¹⁶

¹⁶ Only when a law does not provide for injunctive relief are courts to evaluate the *Dahlberg* factors to determine whether sufficient grounds exist to issue a TRO or temporary injunction. *Cross Country Bank*, 703 N.W.2d at 573 (when statutes specifically provide for injunctive relief court is “not required to make findings on the *Dahlberg* factors to enjoin violation of the statute.”). Where a party “legitimately disputes” the applicability of the underlying statute authorizing injunctive relief, a district court “is not required” to grant a temporary injunction without consideration of the *Dahlberg* factors. *See State v. Int’l Assoc. of Entrepreneurs of Am.*, 527 N.W.2d 133, 137 (Minn. App. 1995) (citing *Pac. Equip. & Irrigation, Inc. v. Toro Co.*, 519 N.W.2d 911, 918 (Minn. App. 1994)). This narrow exception, however, has no application to this case because Pour House cannot legitimately dispute that it owns and operates a restaurant that is subject to Modified Executive Order 20-99, which may be enforced by the Attorney

Here, the State brings this law enforcement action against Pour House to “prevent and restrain” its violations and promised violations of Modified Executive Order 20-99, by offering indoor on-premises consumption of food and beverage and by allowing more than five members of public in the restaurant at one time. *See* Minn. Stat. § 8.31, subd. 3 (providing “the courts of this state are vested with jurisdiction to prevent and restrain violations”). Modified Executive Order 20-99 expressly provides that it can be enforced by the Minnesota Attorney General’s Office (“AGO”) pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 8.31. Section 8.31 authorizes the AGO to “sue for and have injunctive relief in any court of competent jurisdiction against any such violation *or threatened violation* without abridging the penalties provided by law.” Minn. Stat. § 8.31, subd. 3 (emphasis added); *accord* Minn. *School of Business, Inc.*, 899 N.W.2d at 472. Accordingly, the State is entitled to a temporary restraining order (TRO) and temporary injunction (TI) by showing that: (1) Pour House violated, is violating, or “is about to” violate Modified Executive Order 20-99; and (2) the injunctive relief sought by the State would fulfill the purpose of the statute and Order.

As described above, Pour House has knowingly violated Executive Order 20-99 and Modified Executive Order 20-99, and will continue to do so by continuing to serve food and beverages for indoor on-premises consumption and failing to restrict its public capacity to five people or fewer. (Ellis Aff.; Conti Aff. Exs. 5-8.) Consequently, the Court should temporarily enjoin Pour House from violating Modified Executive Order 20-99 and endangering public health and safety by offering indoor on-premises consumption of food and beverages, and by permitting more than five members of the public to enter the establishment at one time.

General pursuant to Minnesota Statutes section 8.31 and statutorily authorizes the Attorney General to, among other things, “sue for and have injunctive relief . . . against any . . . threatened violation.” *See* Minn. Stat. § 8.31, subd. 3.

Lastly, the temporary injunctive relief the State requests would fulfill the purposes of Modified Executive Order 20-99. It would protect public health and safety, slow the community spread of COVID-19, hospitalizations, intensive care unit admissions, and deaths related to COVID-19 by preventing congregation in a restaurant when community spread of COVID-19, test positivity rate, and new COVID-19 cases are at some of their highest levels in Minnesota since the beginning of the pandemic. The purpose of Modified Executive Order 20-99 is to protect the public from public health risks, to “safely bridge the gap to more permanent solutions to this pandemic” and address the lingering dangers of COVID-19. (Executive Order 20-99 at 3; Executive Order 20-103 at 1.) Accordingly, the Court should grant the State’s motion for temporary injunctive relief preventing Pour House from violating Modified Executive Order 20-99 and remaining open for indoor on-premises consumption of food or beverage or allowing more than five members of the public into its restaurant at one time.

II. TEMPORARY INJUNCTIVE RELIEF IS NECESSARY EVEN ASSUMING *ARGUENDO* THAT THE *DAHLBERG* FACTORS WERE APPLICABLE HERE.

Even assuming *arguendo* that the *Dahlberg* factors apply to the State’s motion, such factors weigh strongly in favor in granting the temporary restraining order and temporary injunctive relief the State requests. Each of the following factors weigh in favor of the State: (1) relationship between the parties; (2) relative harm to the parties if injunctive relief is granted or denied; (3) the party’s likelihood of success on the merits; (4) any public interest or public policy involved; and (5) the administrative burdens involved in judicial supervision and enforcement. *Dahlberg Bros. v. Ford Motor Co.*, 137 N.W.2d 314, 321-22 (Minn. 1965).

A. Relationship of the Parties.

The first *Dahlberg* factor—“the nature and background of the relationship between the parties preexisting the dispute giving rise to the request for relief”—weighs heavily in favor of

the State. *Dahlberg Bros.*, 137 N.W.2d at 321. Modified Executive Order 20-99 empowers the Attorney General’s Office to take action against Places of Public Accommodation that are operating in violation of the Order. As the chief legal officer for the State of Minnesota, the Attorney General has authority to file a civil enforcement action seeking injunctive relief (among other remedies) to secure compliance with Modified Executive Order 20-99. *See* Minn. Stat. § 8.31, subds. 3, 3a; Executive Order 20-99 at ¶ 11. Defendant is violating and has threatened to violate the Order, including but not limited to remaining open to the public for indoor on-premises consumption of food and beverage on or after December 16, 2020. Because the background and relationship of the parties is that of regulator and non-compliant regulated entity, the first *Dahlberg* factor heavily favors granting the State’s requested relief. *Accord State ex rel. Swanson v. CashCall, Inc.*, Nos. A13-2086, A14-0028, 2014 WL 4056028, *5 (Minn. App. Aug. 18, 2014), *review denied* (Minn. Nov. 17, 2015). Moreover, Defendant appears to have complied with Executive Order 20-99 initially, and granting injunctive relief would preserve the status quo. That preservation further weighs in favor of granting the injunctive relief requested.

B. Minnesotans Will Be Threatened with Real, Substantial, and Irreparable Injury Absent a Temporary Injunction.

The second *Dahlberg* factor requires the Court to balance the harms to be suffered if the temporary injunction is granted with the harms to be suffered if it is denied. *Dahlberg Bros.*, 137 N.W.2d at 321; *see also Indep. Sch. Dist. No. 35, Marshall County v. Engelstad*, 144 N.W.2d 245, 248 (Minn. 1966) (“There must be threatened injury which is real, substantial, and irreparable.”); *Cramond v. Am. Fed. of Labor & Congress of Indus. Organizations*, 126 N.W.2d 252, 256 (Minn. 1964) (recognizing irreparable injury may occur where the actions of an adverse party may render the relief sought by the other party “ineffectual”).

Here, Minnesotans will be threatened with real, substantial, and irreparable harms for which a future payment of money is not a “realistic remedy” if the Court does not grant the State’s requested temporary injunctive relief. Minnesota is currently experiencing an alarming surge in COVID-19 cases, including the record high daily case numbers received this month and increasing reported deaths. Defendant’s conduct risks further increasing the rate of community spread in Minnesota. Executive Orders 20-99 and 20-103 were thoughtfully conceived by public health professionals to address the specific and deadly exigencies posed by the public health crisis facing our State. (*See* Danila Aff. at ¶¶7-8; Executive Order 20-103 at 1.) Modified Executive Order 20-99 seeks to restrict only that behavior most tied to outbreaks in Minnesota, even as infections grow dangerously higher. (*Id.*) The virus appears to spread most easily between people indoors for extended periods of time, (Danila Aff. at ¶ 9), and those situations are precisely what Defendant’s conduct fosters and will continue to foster. (Conti Aff. Ex. 7.) Compliance with Modified Executive Order 20-99 is critical to slowing the spread of COVID-19 and protecting the capacity of Minnesota’s health system.

Payment of money is not a realistic remedy in this situation, not only for members of the public who could become infected, but for the public as a whole. Such harm also far outweighs any interest Defendant may have in temporarily closing indoor dining to the public (*e.g.*, until January 10, 2021). Because the public health and safety of Minnesotans are threatened by Defendant’s actions in the absence of a temporary restraining order and temporary injunction, this factor weighs strongly in favor of the State.

C. The State is Likely to Succeed on the Merits of Its Claims.

The State is likely to succeed on the merits of its claims because there is overwhelming evidence that Defendant has remained and will remain open to the public in clear violation of

Modified Executive Order 20-99. Defendants have declined all contact from the Attorney General’s Office attempting to provide education about Modified Executive Order 20-99 and restore compliance. (Affidavit of Marianne Ellis (*hereinafter* “Ellis Aff.”).) They continue to operate in open defiance of Modified Executive Order 20-99 by allowing indoor on-premises consumption of food and beverage since December 16, 2020. (Conti. Aff. Exs. 6-8). Defendants have failed and continue to fail to observe even basic health precautions like social distancing and masking. (*Id.*) Defendant’s social media presence confirms its repeated defiance of Executive Order 20-99 and Modified Executive Order 20-99. (Conti Aff. Exs. 6-8.).

Modified Executive Order 20-99 has the force and effect of law. Minn. Stat. § 12.32. Executive orders issued during peacetime emergencies like the present have repeatedly withstood judicial scrutiny. Efforts to invalidate executive orders issued during a public health crisis like the present one are evaluated under the framework of *Jacobson v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 197 U.S. 11, 27 (1905). Under this framework, courts give significant deference to the emergency measures instituted during a public health crisis. “The Constitution does not compel courts to turn a blind eye to the realities of the COVID-19 crisis.” *Cassell v. Snyders*, 20 C 50153, 2020 WL 2112374, at *6 (N.D. Ill. May 3, 2020) (citing *Jacobson*, 197 U.S. at 27).¹⁷

Under *Jacobson*, state action is susceptible to constitutional challenge only if: (1) it has no real or substantial relation to the object of protecting the public health, safety, or morals; or

¹⁷ Moreover, nothing in *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, New York v. Cuomo*, No. 20A87, 2020 WL 6948354, 592 U.S. --- (Nov. 25, 2020) abrogates, overrules, or otherwise limits the application of *Jacobson* here. The Eighth Circuit (and numerous other federal courts) have confirmed that *Jacobson* applies to emergency orders issued to combat COVID-19. *See In re Rutledge*, 956 F.3d 1018, 1027 (8th Cir. 2020). Indeed, the *Roman Catholic* majority did not discuss *Jacobson*, much less overrule or otherwise limit its application and the constitutional issues at play in *Roman Catholic* are easily distinguishable from the case at bar. Thus, any attempted suggestion to the contrary by Defendant is wrong as a matter of law.

(2) “is, beyond all question, a plain, palpable invasion of rights secured by the fundamental law, it is the duty of the courts to so adjudge, and thereby give effect to the Constitution.” *Jacobson*, 197 U.S. at 31. The heightened deference courts apply during public health emergencies is rooted in the fact that “a community has the right to protect itself against an epidemic of disease which threatens the safety of its members.” *Id.* at 27.

The temporary executive actions the Governor has taken in response to the COVID-19 emergency are entitled to substantial judicial deference, and courts may not “second-guess the wisdom or efficacy of the measures.” *Rutledge*, 956 F.3d at 1028 (internal quotations omitted). Courts throughout the country have applied *Jacobson* in upholding a variety of executive orders to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, including measures similar to those contained in Modified Executive Order 20-99.¹⁸ Indeed, in *Stearns*, *Wabasha*, *Polk*, *Ramsey*, and *Dakota* Counties, district courts have held that the State was likely to succeed on the merits against (1) a similarly defiant restaurant that refused to comply with the Governor’s Executive Orders early in the pandemic, (2) a defiant gym that refused to comply with Executive Order 20-99, (3) a defiant

¹⁸ See, e.g., *Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley v. Sisolak*, No. 320-CV-00303, 2020 WL 4260438, at *2-3 (D. Nev. June 11, 2020); *Best Supplement Guide, LLC v. Newsom*, No. 220-CV-00965-JAM/CKD, 2020 WL 2615022, at *3 (E.D. Cal. May 22, 2020) (applying *Jacobson* to reject First and Fourteenth Amendment challenges to California’s executive orders closing gyms, and collecting cases); *Henry v. DeSantis*, No. 20-CV-80729, 2020 WL 2479447, at *6 (S.D. Fla. May 14, 2020) (rejecting First and Fourteenth Amendment challenges to Florida’s executive order closing bars and restaurants); *Friends of Danny DeVito v. Wolf*, No. 68 MM 2020, 2020 WL 1847100, at *16 (Pa. Apr. 13, 2020) (applying *Jacobson* framework in affirming constitutionality of Pennsylvania’s stay-at-home order); *Commcan, Inc. et al. v. Baker*, No. 2084CV00808-BLS2, 2020 WL 1903822, at *6 (Mass. Super. Apr. 16, 2020) (rejecting Equal Protection challenge to executive order closing legal marijuana dispensaries but leaving other businesses open); *Talleywhacker, Inc. v. Cooper*, 2020 WL 3051207 (E.D.N.C.) (denying strip club that also served alcohol and food motion for temporary and rejecting claims under the First, Fifth, and Fourteenth Amendments); *Amato v. Elicker*, 2020 WL 2542788 (D. Conn.) (denying restaurants motion for temporary injunction from bar/restaurant closure order and rejecting First Amendment claims); *McCarthy v. Cuomo*, 2020 WL 3286530 (E.D.N.Y.) (denying strip club/bar/restaurant’s motion for a temporary injunction and rejecting First and Fifth Amendment claims).

restaurant in East Grand Forks that refused to comply with Executive Order 20-99, (4) a defiant restaurant in Lynd that refused to comply with Executive Order 20-99, and (5) a defiant restaurant in Lakeville that refused to comply with Executive Order 20-99. All five courts granted the State’s motions for temporary restraining orders. (Conti Aff., Ex. 9.)

Modified Executive Order 20-99 has a clear connection to the protection of Minnesotans’ health and safety, as shown in both the clear language of the Order and in the data on where COVID-19 spreads most readily. The Order prohibits restaurants from providing indoor on-site consumption of food or beverages, and it limits restaurants to five on-premises customers at any given time waiting for take-out orders. Neither requirement is “beyond all question, a plain, palpable invasion of rights secured by the fundamental law.” *Jacobson*, 197 U.S. at 31; *see, e.g., Stop the Beach Renourishment, Inc. v. Fla. Dep’t of Env’tl. Prot.*, 560 U.S. 702, 721 (2010) (“The liberties protected by substantive due process do not include economic liberties.”); *see also Henry v. DeSantis*, No. 20-CV-80729, 2020 WL 2479447, at *7 (S.D. Fla. May 14, 2020) (“Time and again, the Supreme Court has determined that there is no fundamental right to a job, or right to work”).

Defendant is openly violating Modified Executive Order 20-99. Because the Order has the force and effect of law, passes constitutional muster, and is being openly violated by Defendant, the third *Dahlberg* factor weighs in favor of granting the State’s requested injunctive relief.

D. The Public Interest and Public Policies Strongly Weigh in Favor of the Temporary Injunction.

The fourth *Dahlberg* factor requires consideration of any public interest or public policy expressed in applicable statutes. *Dahlberg Bros.*, 137 N.W.2d at 321-22. As discussed above, the Governor issued Modified Executive Order 20-99 to slow the spread of a deadly infectious

disease. Defendant has violated the Order's safety restrictions by remaining open to the public since December 16, 2020 and thereafter for indoor, on-premises consumption of food and beverages. Public policy clearly weighs in favor of temporary injunctive relief that requires Defendant to temporarily restrict its services to the public in accordance with Modified Executive Order 20-99.

E. The State's Requested Temporary Injunctive Relief Poses Minimal Administrative Burdens on The Court.

Finally, the Court must consider the administrative burdens a temporary injunction may impose upon the Court. *Dahlberg Bros.*, 137 N.W.2d at 322. Here, issuing a temporary injunction will impose minimal administrative burdens on the Court because all the State requests is that Defendant obey the Governor's Modified Executive Order 20-99. Indeed, the State only requests that Defendant conform its conduct to that which is expected of other similarly-situated restaurants in Minnesota. For this reason, this final *Dahlberg* factor also fully favors granting the State's requested temporary injunctive relief.

III. TEMPORARY INJUNCTIVE RELIEF IS NECESSARY BEFORE POUR HOUSE CAN BE HEARD IN OPPOSITION, NECESSITATING AN *EX PARTE* TRO.

The function of a TRO and TI is to preserve the status quo until the matter is adjudicated on the merits. *Prolife Minnesota v. Minnesota Pro-Life Committee*, 632 N.W.2d 748, 753 (Minn. Ct. App. 2001) (discussing purpose of TRO); *Metro. Sports Facilities Comm'n v. Minn. Twins P'ship*, 638 N.W.2d 214, 220 (Minn. App. 2002) (discussing purpose of temporary injunction). In order to obtain temporary injunctive relief before Pour House can be heard in opposition (*i.e.* an *ex parte* TRO), the State must show that:

- (1) It clearly appears from specific facts shown by affidavit or by the verified complaint that immediate and irreparable injury, loss, or damage will result to the applicant before the adverse party or that party's attorney can be heard in opposition, and
- (2) the applicant's attorney states to the court in writing the

efforts, if any, which have been made to give notice or the reasons supporting the claim that notice should not be required.

Minn. R. Civ. P. 65.01.

Immediate and irreparable injury will result if the State is required to wait until Pour House can be fully heard in opposition to the State's request for temporary injunctive relief authorized by Minnesota Statutes section 8.31 and Modified Executive Order 20-99. Pour House has represented publicly that it will continue offering indoor on-premises consumption of food or beverage to the public, and allow more than five members of the public in its restaurant, in violation of Modified Executive Order 20-99. Pour House's ongoing conduct is a continuing violation and a series of individual violations since Executive Order 20-99 and Modified Executive Order 20-99 went into effect.

Given Defendant's ongoing and flagrant violations of Executive Order 20-99 and Modified Executive Order 20-99, there is insufficient time to provide Defendant the ability to negotiate a time for a hearing or fully respond in writing. Nevertheless, the Minnesota Attorney General's Office does not oppose Defendant appearing for hearing so long as the State's Motion is heard expeditiously and in manner that does not prevent effective temporary relief.

The State has met all required elements for a TRO enjoining Pour House from violating Modified Executive Order 20-99 and providing for on-premises consumption of food and beverages and allowing more than five members of the public in its restaurant at one time. Accordingly, the Court should grant the State's Motion for a TRO and schedule a TI hearing at the earliest practical time.¹⁹ Minn. R. Civ. P. 65.01 (If a TRO is granted without notice to an

¹⁹ Despite the requirements for security set forth in Minn. R. Civ. P. 65.03(a) and Minn. Stat. § 570.041, subd. 1, the State is entitled to temporary injunctive relief without the giving of a security or bond. *See* Minn. Stat. § 574.18 (“No undertaking or bond need be given upon any appeal or other proceeding instituted in favor of the state”); *State v. Nelson*, 189 Minn. 87, 89-90, 248 N.W. 751, 752 (1933) (recognizing the term “proceeding” includes “every

opposing party, “the motion for a temporary injunction shall be set down for hearing at the earliest practicable time...and when the motion comes on for hearing, the party who obtained the [TRO] shall proceed with the application for a temporary injunction.”)

CONCLUSION

For the above reasons, the State respectfully requests that the Court grant its *Ex Parte* Motion for a Temporary Restraining Order and Temporary Injunction and award the State the entirety of the temporary relief it seeks, as detailed in its accompanying proposed order.

Dated: December 22, 2020

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proceeding before a competent court in the due course of the proper administration of justice and which is to result in any determination.”).

MINN. STAT. § 549.211 ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The party on whose behalf the attached document is served acknowledges through its undersigned counsel that sanctions, including reasonable attorney fees and other expenses, may be awarded to the opposite party or parties pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 549.211 (2020).

/s/ Erin Conti

ERIN CONTI