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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

In a joint statement issued today, local law enforcement leaders of Ford County confirmed that it was their intention to respond to calls received regarding alleged violations of the Governor's Executive Order, and when necessary, seek voluntary compliance through education and discussion with anyone violating the EO.

Sheriff Mark Doran, Paxton Police Chief Coy Cornett, and Gibson City Police Chief Adam Rosendahl, along with Ford County State's Attorney Andrew Killian issued the statement to explain how they anticipate handling alleged violations under the Governor's extension of the Stay-at-Home Order.

"The Governor has repeatedly stated in press conferences that he is not seeking enforcement through arrests, and we will take him at his word. The citizens of Ford County have thus far exercise common sense and good judgement throughout this pandemic, and we see no reason why they would stop now."

Upon receiving a call of an alleged violation, law enforcement will respond and if they observe a violation will ask those individuals to comply. If the individual or individuals refuse, a report will be prepared and transmitted to the State's Attorney's Office and Public Health Department, but it is not anticipated an arrest will be made.

The law enforcement heads clarified however, that violations of the Illinois Criminal Code may still result in an arrest and prosecution. As an example, if a person is not wearing a mask while inside a business, and is asked to leave by the owner, but refuses, they could be arrested and prosecuted for Criminal Trespass.

"While the choice of the individual to wear or not wear a mask is not going to be enforced through arrest powers, the private property rights of a business owner will be protected."

Additionally, the law enforcement leaders cautioned businesses about opening in contravention to the Executive Order without doing some investigating. Business owners especially those holding a State license, such as from the Department of Finance and Professional Regulation or the Gaming Commission may still be subject to enforcement action by those agencies. Owners are also encouraged to check with their insurance provider to make sure they will be covered for any incidents that occur during a time they are ordered to be closed.

In an effort to ease some of the economic burden on the local economy, Ford County Health Department Administrator Lana Sample indicated that she is working with the State's Attorney's Office and local law enforcement agencies on a procedure that may allow some businesses currently ordered closed to open in the near future.

We all understand that ultimately, it will be the Illinois Supreme Court that determines whether the Governor has overstepped his authority in issuing the Extended Stay-at-Home Order, but between now and then, we do not anticipate arresting individuals for walking down the street without a mask on.