

Paul E. Gazelka
State Senator

Senate District 9
Morrison, Todd, Wadena
and Cass Counties



Minnesota
Senate

MAJORITY LEADER

September 3, 2020

VIA ELECTRONIC DELIVERY

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor of Minnesota
130 State Capitol
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.
St. Paul, MN 55155

Governor Walz:

I'm writing in response to the letter from your chief of staff before our meeting today. Since I addressed my original letter to the you, our elected state leader, it's telling that you delegated responsibility of a response to someone else.

We have a difference of opinion regarding the definition of "legislative involvement" when it comes to Minnesota's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Ever since your initial emergency declaration 175 days ago, your definition of legislative involvement has been limited to informational meetings where your administration informs the legislative branch of decisions already made.

Most of these informational meetings were staff briefings attended by our Senate committee chairs and appropriate Senate staff. Ironically, you yourself did not attend a majority of the meetings your chief of staff accused me of missing in his letter. You and I weren't there because no decisions were being made. Interestingly, your office provided less than a 24-hour notice ahead of last Sunday's meeting with Dr. Birx.

Since before statehood, decisions involving public policy and spending have been made through the legislative process as outlined in our state constitution. We've been asking you to end emergency powers and re-engage with the legislative process, instead of making decisions and spending money on your own.

September 3, 2003

September 3, 2020
Page 2

Legislative involvement means we pass bills, you sign them, and your administration carries out the law. This process worked well early in the pandemic and it needs to return.

Which brings me to the original – and yet to be answered - question of my August 28 letter:
What criteria will be used in determining when the COVID-19 peacetime emergency declaration will be rescinded?

Minnesotans expect our meeting today to focus on your answer to that question and not on my attendance record at staff briefings after you have taken unilateral actions. While I'm focused on getting our kids back into school safely and keeping order in our streets, you're focused on my attendance record at your staff briefings.

Again, we have flattened the curve, no Minnesotan has been denied necessary medical treatment, and, thankfully, our hospitals have not needed to use their surge capacity. While we all agree that the COVID-19 pandemic is a serious health matter having a significant impact on our economy, there is no longer an emergency.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Paul Gazelka". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Paul Gazelka
Majority Leader
Minnesota Senate District 9