



GASTON PROMISE

★ PUTTING THE PEOPLE FIRST ★

The Gaston County Board of Commissioners supports the reopening of businesses and houses of worship throughout Gaston County as long as they adhere to strict social distancing practices, follow all cleaning and disinfection requirements, and abide by all maximum capacity restrictions required by local and state authorities.

Capacity, as used here, is defined as the number of individuals below the local fire code threshold that can fit inside the establishment while still practicing strict social distancing. That is, as long as you do not violate local fire code thresholds and you ensure that individuals inside the establishment adhere to strict social distancing practices, you are in compliance as it relates to capacity.

We understand that what the Board supports is not in lock step with the Governor's executive order, but we support putting our citizens back to work and allowing them to worship corporately, both of which are their constitutional rights. In fact, we are reminded by Article I, Section 13 of our North Carolina Constitution, that "all persons have a natural and inalienable right to worship Almighty God according to the dictates of their own consciences, and no human authority shall, in any case whatever, control or interfere with the rights of conscience." Worship – whether by oneself or corporately – is an inalienable right of the people.

Furthermore, it is no coincidence that our State's founders listed the following atop all the rights guaranteed to North Carolinians in our Constitution's Declaration of Rights: "We hold it to be self-evident that all persons are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty, the enjoyment of the fruits of their own labor, and the pursuit of happiness." Work – whether at home or at one's business – is also an inalienable right of the people.

The Board makes this promise to its people and expects a promise in return – that the citizens of Gaston County exercise their rights responsibly and that they use common sense as it relates to their own health and safety. The Board also reminds citizens throughout Gaston County that large gatherings, banquets, and concerts continue to be restricted. The restrictions on long term care facilities and nursing homes are also very much in place. Businesses governed by licensing boards at the state level are encouraged to consult with their respective boards.

Gaston County officials are continuously monitoring COVID-19 data applicable to our community and communities across the State and will continue to make data-driven decisions for its citizens. Individuals or business owners inquiring whether the State deems them essential or non-essential and whether it is the State's position that they may operate should contact Secretary Ronald Penny of the North Carolina Department of Revenue at ronald.penny@ncdor.gov or by phone at 919-814-1006.

