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KNPR's State of Nevada

On April 25, 2020 KNPR aired a story called, *Governor Says Resorts Worried Mayor's Comments Will Hurt Vegas*. Host Joe Schoenman invited Nevada's Governor, Steve Sisolak to the show and talked about various plans he had in mind to move forward amid this COVID-19 pandemic.

More specifically, this episode talked about several COVID topics, starting with the Mayor Goodman controversy. The Las Vegas Mayor, Carolyn Goodman recently went on CNN and was apart of the interview. She went under fire after stating her opinion on reopening the state. Many people thought it would lead to a decreasing of tourism. Goodman offered the city to be a, "control group," and this unsurprisingly lead to some eyebrows being raised. Obviously this is a big deal because Las Vegas has an economy that relies on tourism, and some went to social media to protest. People made comments such as, "I will never return to Vegas," and others were worried that Nevada doesn't care about public health . Sisolak made it clear in this episode that Goodman was simply following her first amendment right, but emphasized the fact that it is not in her jurisdiction to make calls like that. She has little influence over the casinos on the strip.

The episode then transitions to what Sisolak's plan is for moving into phase one. He understands that people are anxious to go back to work, but he also needs to think about those who are autoimmune compromised. He says before he moves from phase zero to phase one he

wants to see a decline in positive test cases. He admits that right now they're looking at a 12% or 13% range of positive tests and that number is expected to go up. The reason why the numbers might seem high is because they're specifically targeting people who might be sick. Those who show symptoms, those with diabetes or other pre-existing conditions, are high risk to exposure, etc. Now that they've tested a majority of people who fall into that category, he wants to move and provide testing for everyone else now. This will lead the number of positive cases to go down. He's looking specifically at taking the percent of positives they get versus the tests given, and that's how they will determine when to go into phase one. (Spoiler alert: it happened this weekend!) Before moving to phase one, Sisolak is also monitoring the number of beds available in the intensive care units. Naturally, since more businesses will be open there will be a greater risk of more people catching the virus. He wants to make sure that they will be prepared in case there is a surge of cases. So, he is also looking for a decrease of people in intensive care.

The next topic is about health experts. Some health experts believe that we shouldn't move into phase one at least until June. Sisolak is partially on Goodman's side for this one. "People can only stay out of work for so long. I'm concerned about the economy." It makes sense that he would want to open golf courses and parks first. Those are easy places to social distance. He says that health experts will most likely keep pushing back recommended opening dates, and he wants to start getting back to normal as soon as possible.

The reason for this is because the closure of the state has led to revenue shortages. There's talk about states going bankrupt. Sisolak shares that one of the main arguments he gets is, "States that tend to be blue, like Nevada, are more likely to go bankrupt." He rebuts this by saying that all states are closed right now, and all states have an equal chance of facing that

hardship. Every state has difficulty with budgeting right now, they are facing unemployment issues, are facing revenue problems, and so on. Sisolak believes that in the case that states do go bankrupt that the federal government should help them

The last topic that was discussed was in regards to prisoners. Nevada has a very high incarceration rate. It is know that Coronavirus is easily spread in places like this. Some people think that those who are in jail for non-violent crimes should be released. He acknowledges this and said there are teams looking in specifics about this. His main concern is making sure that if they do decide to release people, that they would have a fighting chance. This means that they would have access to proper food and shelter resources

This broadcast included a lot of concepts from our class. From jurisdictions to federalism, to local governments, this episode had a lot of great examples of political science.