

There has been such an outpouring of support from bowlers for the opening of bowling centers within our area. Washington state has organized several “Bring Back Bowling” rallies to show support that has garnered the attention of mainstream local media as well as the Washington legislature. In Oregon, the Oregon State Bowling Proprietors Association (OSBPA) is diligently working behind the scenes in trying to communicate to government officials the viability of opening bowling centers.

What can we do individually as bowlers to continue to support? While this is primarily for the Greater Portland and Umatilla County centers, it could also apply to any county that could possibly slide back to Phase 1. With the unpredictability of how this pandemic will progress in the future, it is not out of the realm of possibilities that other counties could conceivably revert back to Phase 1 or worse as has happened in Umatilla County. Bowlers can communicate their concerns to government officials. The survival of our local bowling centers is now very much at stake with the latest government mandates. If bowling is to survive, our voices need to be heard. If we are to write e-mails or letters to our government leaders, we need to make sure we demonstrate not only our passion for our sport, but also back that passion up with well-crafted fact-based information.

Here are some tidbits of fact-based information gleaned from reputable sources that you can use in communications to your government leaders.

- From the World Health Organization (WHO): From the WHO website, the WHO is a multi-national organization with over 150 member nations that promotes health, keeps the world safe, and serves the vulnerable. One of the tasks of the WHO in this end is to identify health emergencies by identifying, mitigating, and managing risks. From the Mythbusters page of the WHO website :
  - One of the myths covered on this page states that the likelihood of shoes spreading COVID-19 is very low. One of the concerns regarding bowling center operations is the use of rental bowling shoes. As stated by WHO, concerns of spread through shoes is very low.
  - Another tidbit directly from that same page. *“People should NOT wear masks when exercising, as masks may reduce the ability to breathe comfortably. Sweat can make the mask become wet more quickly which makes it difficult to breathe and promotes the growth of microorganisms. The important preventive measure during exercise is to maintain physical distance of at least one meter from others.”* First off, bowling is exercise. According to an HCPLive article, *Physical Fitness: Bowling’s Hidden Exercise (2015)*, bowling has hidden exercise benefits and should definitely be considered exercise. HCPLive is a resource portal for physicians. So, allowing a mask to be taken down while making a bowling delivery should not violate given mandates as per the WHO recommendation. Next, understanding the dimensions of a bowling lane include the approach portion which is 15 feet long and over 60 inches wide for each lane and these dimensions need consideration. Maintaining the WHO recommended physical

distance of at least one meter from others is easily achieved within these dimensions while bowling. Even using the 6-foot guideline recommended by local government health officials, bowlers can use consecutive lanes as long as bowlers wait their turn as in the traditional league and tournament protocol and wait for the adjacent lane to finish before starting his or her turn as well as follow now-commonly established bowling center guidelines for social distancing when not bowling.

- The Center for Disease Control (CDC) is a component of the federal Department of Health and Human Services and states in the first line of their mission statement, “CDC [works 24/7](#) to protect America from health, safety and security threats, both foreign and in the U.S.” On May 22<sup>nd</sup>, the CDC updated its guidance that COVID-19 does not spread easily on surfaces. With this update, the concerns that bowling house balls could be a source of infection has been overstated. As the OSBPA has guided its member centers in the proper sanitation methods needed to ensure the safety of bowlers, the concern regarding house balls is negligible
- According to the Oregon Health Authority (OHA) website, one of the ways to manage stress and anxiety about COVID-19 is to build some social connections. Bowling can serve as this outlet for building social connections to help manage stress and anxiety much like it did in pre-pandemic days. Staying active is also promoted by the OHA to reduce stress and anxiety regarding COVID-19. The reference to staying active is through outdoor exercise or alone in your home, but bowling, with its spacious indoor facilities can offer that same safe environment as well. It is this reference that can be used in letters to government officials that can help convey the importance of the social aspect bowling provides. I’m sure most everyone has anecdotal stories of how bowling fosters better mental health and these stories can be bolstered with the OHA’s own recommendations.

These are just some examples of fact-based information that can be used in communicating with government officials regarding allowing bowling centers to open. This information is not from social media, it’s not from right- or left-wing news media/entertainment platforms. This is information straight from reputable world, national, and local health organizations and that source should be pointed out in any communication to government leaders.

This is just a tiny bit of information that can prove useful when crafting communications. Please, try to remember that when communicating to government officials, inflammatory rhetoric based on high emotions without the support of fact-based information is actually damaging to the cause. Some government officials obviously already have negative ancient preconceived ideas about bowling, shouting irrationally will only reinforce those preconceived ideas. The OSBPA is doing its best to communicate that current bowling centers are clean and modern and far removed from the stereotypical bowling alleys of the past, and helping with fact-based information, individual bowlers can only reinforce the message that today’s bowlers are indeed part of the present and not the past. To

contact Governor Brown's office, use this link - <https://www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/share-your-opinion.aspx?fbclid=IwAR0EBC694Mk7c433zC4WPenNinwEekUa-9dNf7EvA8ga-6WUa3cPrXOUgX0>.

Choose your words carefully and write with passion, just don't let the passion overrun the message. Just to be absolutely clear and for Oregon's purposes, that message, to apologetically modify Washington's slogan, "Bring Back and Keep Bowling!"

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