

Help me answer 8 straight forward questions!

As many regions of Ontario shut off and shut down economic activity **again** on Monday December 14, 2020, a few questions came to mind. I could not find good answers and felt sad for the many **owners** of small and medium size businesses and their **employees**, forced to close the physical doors to their establishments. These included most retailers (unless classified as “essential”), hair salons, gyms, spas, restaurants, and many other B2C (business to consumer) operations, which depend on the holiday season for a major boost to their livelihood. These business owners have been hurting a great deal since March 2020. Many have closed down already, while countless large businesses have been thriving.

I am reminded of the saying: “**Don't throw the baby out with the bathwater**”, an idiomatic expression for an avoidable error in which something good is eliminated when trying to get rid of something bad. In other words, are we rejecting the favorable along with the unfavorable? See if you can help me answer these 8 simple questions.

1. Why can I go to Costco and/or Walmart and buy a T-shirt but not to a small shop retailer for the same T-shirt?
2. Why can I sit in the middle seat row on an airline flight, shoulder to shoulder with two other people for several hours, but cannot sit next to the same people at the airport?
3. How come I can enjoy my brown bag lunch on a four-hour flight sitting next to 2 other persons but cannot sit across from the same 2 persons at a restaurant?
4. Is the way in which the criteria for “essential businesses” are being applied, **fair**? Businesses that have been classified essential can open and serve customers, and businesses that are not classified essential must close. Does this mean that a non-essential business can become an essential business simply by doing the following?
 - If you are a hairdresser, start selling food?
 - If you are a gym, now offer oil change and tires repair services?
 - If you are a restaurant, start selling masks, gloves, aspirin, and sanitizers, and thereby be classified as an essential business under the same criteria as a distributor of medical equipment and supplies?
5. Next, let's look at some of the numbers. TEEN CHALLENGE CANADA reports that **47,000 Canadian deaths** are linked to substance abuse **annually**. (Source: Health Officers' Council of BC). As of December 13, 2020, **13,431 COVID-19 deaths** related in Canada were reported by Health Canada. All of these deaths are tragic, but should one have priority over the other?
6. Recovery rates from COVID-19 is between 97% and 99.7% (Source: WEBMED). Is the recovery rate from substance abuse higher or lower? (This is a trick question: the recovery rate is *much* lower for substance abuse.)
7. Active COVID cases in Canada currently are **73,569**, of which 72,973 (99.2%) are classified as mild and **596** (0.8%) serious or critical (Source: WORLDOMETER) Are our hospitals backed up because of these 596 COVID-19 cases?
8. Canada's latest population estimate in July 2020 was **38,005,238**. (Source: STATSCANADA) Dividing our **73,569** COVID-19 cases by the population gives me 0.0019. To get this result in percentage, I need to multiply by 100. This gives me 0.19% in terms of how many have been impacted to date. Is my math correct?

Closing Thoughts

The federal government recently projected the national deficit to hit at least **\$381.6 billion** this fiscal year. While I want to have confidence that our politicians' motives are sincere, dividing the \$381.6 billion by our population number, **our individual share of just this year's deficit** comes to **\$10,040.72** (Per Capita i.e., per person)

We are all together when it comes to COVID-19 of course, but I do not think we are all facing it under the same circumstances. Stay with me for a moment: If a small business is shut off or become unprofitable, employees are laid-off - simple market forces economics. How come this rule does not apply to government? I've never heard of any employee lay-offs at the government level, its subsidiaries or agencies. If there is a change in staff, employees are typically transferred to another ministry or agency where they continue to receive a pay cheque (with benefits) or retired early with a truly “golden handshake”. Does government really understand what's at stake here? Maybe some government employees should just stand in the unemployment line and find out what it's like. They do not need to apply.... **Just to show some solidarity. Perhaps then they might realize that the cure appears to be causing more damage/or as much damage than the disease itself!**

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