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U.S. manufacturing contracts; private payrolls post first drop since 2017



Inside C2

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South Korea minister, U.S. sources, say Kim may be sheltering from virus



North Korean leader Kim Jong Un holds a military meeting in Pyongyang, North Korea, in this photo released on March 27, 2019 by North Korea's Korean Central News Agency (KCNA). KCNA/ via REUTERS

SEOUL/WASHINGTON (Reuters) - Fear of the coronavirus could have been keeping North Korean leader Kim Jong Un out of public sight, a South Korean minister and U.S. sources said on Tuesday, following intense speculation and concern as to his whereabouts and health.

Under Kim's rule since 2011, North Korea has expanded its arsenal of nuclear weapons and long-range missiles, and with no obvious successor, any change in leadership in the secretive, authoritarian state would raise concerns about instability that could impact other North Asian countries and the United States.

Speculation about Kim's health erupted after his unprecedented absence from April 15 celebrations to mark the birthday of his late grandfather and North Korea's founder, Kim Il Sung.

South Korean Unification Minister Kim Yeon-chul, who oversees engagement with North Korea, said it was plausible Kim had decided against attending due to the coronavirus, given stringent steps his government has taken to head off an outbreak.

"He had never missed the anniversary for Kim Il Sung's birthday since he took power, but many anniversary events including celebrations and a banquet had been cancelled because of coronavirus concerns," the minister told a par-

liamentary hearing. Japan PM paying close attention to reports on North Korea's Kim "I don't think that's particularly unusual given the current (coronavirus) situation," the minister said, although North Korea has said it has no confirmed cases of the coronavirus.

An authoritative source familiar with U.S. intelligence assessments said credible reports to the U.S. government suggested the reason Kim's presidential train had been spotted near a presidential retreat at the resort of Wonsan last week was that Kim had been staying there to avoid catching the virus.

U.S. government experts lacked categorical evidence to prove this, but were for the most part dismissing media reports suggesting that Kim had contracted some kind of serious illness, the source said.

Kim Yeon-chul described reports that Kim had undergone a heart procedure, and that a Chinese medical team had travelled to North Korea, as "fake news."

A U.S. official, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Washington's view was largely in line with the South Korean minister's assessment.

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday he has a good idea of how Kim Jong Un is doing and hopes he is fine, but would not elaborate.

On Tuesday, Trump was asked by a reporter about these comments and whether he thought Kim was still in control of North Korea and replied: "I don't want to comment on it. I just wish him well."

Trump has met Kim three times in an attempt to persuade him to give up a nuclear weapons program that threatens the United States as well as its Asian neighbours. While talks have stalled, Trump has continued to hail Kim as a friend.

TRAIN AND BOAT WATCHING

The South Korean minister noted that there had been at least two instances since mid-January when Kim Jong Un had not been seen in public for nearly 20 days.

The last time official media in North Korea reported on Kim's whereabouts was when he presided over a meeting on April 11, but there have been near-daily reports of him sending letters and diplomatic messages. South Korean officials have said they have detected no unusual movements in North Korea and have cautioned against reports that Kim may be ill.

Washington-based North Korea monitoring project 38 North said on Saturday satellite images from last week showed a special train that was probably Kim's at Wonsan, lending weight to reports he had been spending time in the resort area.

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Piglets aborted, chickens gassed as pandemic slams meat sector

CHICAGO (Reuters) - With the pandemic hobbling the meat-packing industry, Iowa farmer Al Van Beek had nowhere to ship his full-grown pigs to make room for the 7,500 piglets he expected from his breeding operation. The crisis forced a decision that still troubles him: He ordered his employees to give injections to the pregnant sows, one by one, that would cause them to abort their baby pigs.

Van Beek and other farmers say they have no choice but to cull livestock as they run short on space to house their animals or money to feed them, or both. The world's biggest meat companies - including Smithfield Foods Inc, Cargill Inc, JBS USA and Tyson Foods Inc - have halted operations at about 20 slaughterhouses and processing plants in North America since April as workers fall ill, stoking global fears of a meat shortage.

Van Beek's piglets are victims of a sprawling food-industry crisis that began with the mass closure of restaurants - upending that sector's supply chain, overwhelming storage and forcing farmers and processors to destroy everything from milk to salad greens to animals. Processors geared up to serve the food-service industry can't immediately switch to supplying grocery stores. Millions of pigs, chickens and cattle will be euthanized because of slaughterhouse closures, limiting supplies at grocers, said John Tyson, chairman of top U.S. meat supplier Tyson Foods. Pork has been hit especially hard, with daily production cut by about a third. Unlike cattle, which can be housed outside on pasture, U.S. hogs are fattened up for slaughter inside temperature-controlled buildings. If they are housed too long, they can get too big and injure themselves. The barns need to be emptied out by sending adult hogs to slaughter before the arrival of new piglets from sows that were impregnated just before the pandemic. "We have nowhere to go with the pigs," said Van Beek, who lamented the waste of so much meat. "What are we

going to do?" In Minnesota, farmers Kerry and Barb Mergen felt their hearts pound when a crew from Daybreak Foods Inc arrived with carts and tanks of carbon dioxide to euthanize their 61,000 egg-laying hens earlier this month. Daybreak Foods, based in Lake Mills, Wisconsin, supplies liquid eggs to restaurants and food-service companies. The company, which owns the birds, pays contract farmers like the Mergens to feed and care for them. Drivers normally load the eggs onto trucks and haul them to a plant in Big Lake, Minnesota, which uses them to make liquid eggs for restaurants and ready-to-serve dishes for food-service companies. But the plant's operator, Cargill Inc, said it idled the facility because the pandemic reduced demand.

Daybreak Foods, which has about 14.5million hens with contractor-run or compa-

ny-owned farms in the Midwest, is trying to switch gears and ship eggs to grocery stores, said Chief Executive Officer William Rehms. But egg cartons are in short supply nationwide and the company now must grade each egg for size, he said. **DUMPING HOGS IN A LANDFILL** In Iowa, farmer Dean Meyer said he is part of a group of about nine producers who are euthanizing the smallest 5% of their newly born pigs, or about 125 piglets a week. They will continue euthanizing animals until disruptions ease, and could increase the number of pigs killed each week, he said. The small bodies are composted and will become fertilizer. Meyer's group is also killing mother hogs, or sows, to reduce their numbers, he said. "Packers are backed up every day, more and more," said Meyer.

As the United States faces a possible food shortage, and supermarkets and food

banks are struggling to meet demand, the forced slaughters are becoming more widespread across the country, according to agricultural economists, farm trade groups and federal lawmakers who are hearing from farmer constituents.

Iowa Governor Kim Reynolds, along with both U.S. senators from a state that provides a third of the nation's pork, sent a letter to the Trump administration pleading for financial help and assistance with culling animals and properly disposing of their carcasses. "There are 700,000 pigs across the nation that cannot be processed each week and must be humanely euthanized," said the April 27 letter. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) said late Friday it is establishing a National Incident Coordination Center to help farmers find markets for their livestock, or euthanize and dispose of animals if necessary.



Hog farmer Mike Patterson's animals, who have been put on a diet so they take longer to fatten up due to the supply chain disruptions caused by coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreaks, at his property in Kenyon, Minnesota, U.S. April 23, 2020. REUTERS/ Nicholas Pfosi

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Save Lives!

Remote Work, Automation, And Telemedicine Could Soon Become The "New Normal" Seven Predictions For A Post-Coronavirus World



(Image/imaginima/E+/Getty Images)
By Guest Writer Emma Rose Bienvenu

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The coronavirus pandemic will be remembered as a world-reordering event. Like the Great Depression, the fall of the Berlin Wall, and the 2008 global financial crisis, it will accelerate social and economic changes that would otherwise have taken years to materialize. However long it will take, we will eventually beat back this virus, and our economies will eventually recover from the punishing recession it will have brought about. But when the dust settles and the masks come off, the pandemic will have permanently reshaped our social and economic behavior. Here are a few outcomes, based on current factual circumstances, that seem increasingly likely. **1. Companies that traffic in digital services and e-commerce will make immediate and lasting gains** With people isolated indoors and away from other people, short-term winners will be those who provide goods and services without needing to come into physical contact with their customers. Winners in this category will be cloud computing providers (for example, Amazon Web Services), remote work services like Zoom, Slack, Microsoft Teams, virtual reality companies like Oculus, streaming services like Netflix, and esports organizations like Clo ud9. Social media traffic will soar, but advertiser revenue will suffer from weak demand in a

crippled economy. Coca-Cola has already pulled all social media ads; as its peers follow suit, the sharp overall decrease in ad spend will reverberate down to production companies, advertising agencies, and TV and radio stations. In the short term, e-commerce platforms, food delivery services, and logistics companies will also be winners. When the economy does eventually improve, these gains will mostly endure thanks to entrenched shifts in consumers' buying habits. **2. Remote work will become the default** Employees who are suddenly working from home by necessity are experiencing a change in their work style that spares them the suit and commute and gives many of them greater flexibility with their schedules and demands outside of work. Many will find they prefer working remotely and, when the crisis recedes, it will become hard and expensive for some companies to deny them that option, while others will want to take advantage of this new preference.



Remote work technology will improve, enabling the sort of mingling previously

thought to require in-person meetings. Coupled with stricter travel restrictions and mandatory quarantines for foreigners entering certain countries, this will also put severe strain on industries reliant on business travel. It will also lead to an exodus of white-collar workers from big cities — once companies' remote work routines have been smoothed out, their newly remote-capable employees will have the flexibility to move out of dense cities and into lower-cost areas. **3. Many jobs will be automated, and the rest will be made remote-capable** To survive the crisis, firms will need to lay off their least-productive workers, automate what can be automated, and make the rest remote-capable. Those who do this effectively will emerge leaner and more efficient. They will also have no incentive to return to their pre-crisis head count — and many of those whose functions have been automated will lack the skills to compete in the new, post-crisis economy. Labor force participation will suffer. In the medium and longer term, these companies will also realize that the functions they have made remote-capable can also be performed by highly skilled workers in lower-cost countries. In short, jobs will first move from in-person to remote-domestic, and in time they will go from remote-domestic to remote-overseas. **4. Telemedicine will become the new normal, signaling an explosion in med-tech innovation** In a matter of weeks, regulatory barriers to telemedicine in the U.S. have largely fallen. Doctors in the U.S. now perform remote visits across state lines, can email and video-chat patients in compliance with HIPAA, and Medicare and health insurance providers have to now reimburse telemedicine services. Though these measures were announced as temporary, those who have now had firsthand experience with the convenience and cost-effectiveness of telemedicine will



not want to forgo it. Once the crisis recedes,

health care will begin to be provided remotely by default, not necessity, allowing the best doctors to scale their services to far more patients. The human and economic cost of the pandemic will inject Department of Defense-level spending into telemedicine, medical imaging companies, diagnostics companies, and virology research. Telehealth offerings will improve and proliferate, with better at-home testing and diagnostics products and the ubiquitous adoption of wearables that continuously monitor for symptoms. Major cities will put in place permanent pandemic surveillance systems, and many businesses a **5. The nationwide student debt crisis will finally abate as higher education begins to move online** The pandemic has forced numerous universities to move classes online, prompting calls from students for reimbursements of tuition and expenses. If, come fall semester, universities are still teaching online, what percentage of those students will re-enroll at pre-crisis tuition levels? The worldwide remote learning experiment that is currently underway may demonstrate that higher learning can function effectively at a fraction of in-person costs. If it does, it may lead to a reckoning that transforms the delivery of higher education, particularly for less-selective universities, as students re-weigh the costs and benefits of a four-year residential experience. Universities will also face pressure to cut costs from the severely cash-strapped state governments that fund them. Many will eventually adopt hybrid models that limit face-to-face learning to project-based assignments and student working groups. These will dramatically cut costs, while allowing the best instructors to scale their insights to more students. **6. Goods and people will move less often and less freely across national and regional borders** Countries will retreat into themselves, borders will become less porous, and international trade will slump. To bolster their ability to survive extended periods of economic self-isolation, governments will push to strengthen domestic manufacturing capacity and step in to inject adequate redundancy in critical supply chains. Even before the pan-

demical struck, higher wages in China, international trade wars, and the rise of semi-autonomous factories had already prompted firms to reshore manufacturing, bringing it closer to domestic research and development centers. The coronavirus crisis will accelerate this trend: Increasingly, corporations will favor the resiliency of centralized domestic supply chains over the efficiency of globalized ones, while the **7. After an initial wave of isolationism, multilateral cooperation may flourish** After an initial retreat from globalization, countries might come to recognize that technological and viral threats are existential, and therefore require international cooperation. Adopting a sense of pragmatic internationalism, countries would develop international norms, monitoring and reporting systems, and coordinated response and contingency plans. When the next pandemic strikes, global monitoring and reporting systems would detect it earlier. A coordinated global response would make self-isolation orders effective, shortening the economic shutdown and hopefully sparing lives. (Courtesy <https://marker.medium.com/>)



Editor’s Choice



A man walks past a closed shopping centre, as authorities race to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in Abuja



Toilet paper rolls fill the shelves at a Coop grocery store, as the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) continues, in Stockholm, Sweden, April 28, 2020. REUTERS/Anna Ringstrom



U.S. Navy Blue Angels and Air Force Thunderbirds New York City flyover during the outbreak of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19)



People watch the U.S. Navy Blue Angels and U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds demonstration teams participating in a midday flyover of New York as part of the “America Strong” tour of U.S. cities to honor first responders and essential workers during the outbreak of the coronavirus



Michela Perrini, 9, practices ballet in her living room using a video tutorial on her laptop in the small southern historical town of Cisternino



People attend a collective burial of people that have passed away due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at the Parque Taruma cemetery in Manaus, Brazil April 28, 2020. REUTERS/Bruno Kelly



Medical staff assess for COVID-19 at public Victoria Health Unit, BC



Detroit residents line-up to be tested for free for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at the Sheffield Center in Detroit, Michigan, U.S., April 28, 2020. REUTERS/Rebecca Cook

Birx Says Social Distancing Will Continue Through The Summer

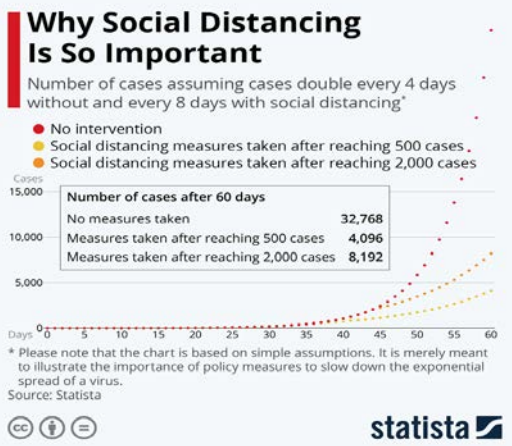


White House coronavirus task force coordinator Deborah Birx said social distancing could last months. (Photo/J. Botsford/Washington Post)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

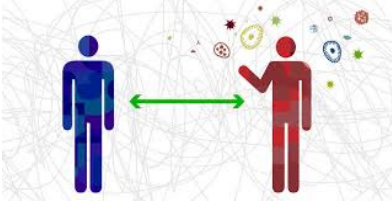
White House coronavirus task force coordinator Deborah Birx on Sunday said social distancing will continue through the summer, as the governors of two US states defended their decisions to reopen their economies. Birx also defended President Trump’s comments on disinfectants as treatment, which continued to draw criticism from governors. Birx appeared to contradict Vice President Mike Pence’s comment that the epidemic would be mostly “behind us” by the end of May, when she said social distancing will continue beyond that. “Social distancing will be with us through the summer to really ensure that we protect one another,” she said on NBC News’s “Meet the Press.” Birx added that the country needed to have a “breakthrough” in testing for antigens — molecules or molecular structures that trigger an immune response — to

get on track for normalcy. During a radio interview with WTAM in Cleveland on Friday, Pence said, “I think honestly, if you look at the trends today, that I think by Memorial Day weekend we will largely have this coronavirus epidemic behind us.”



Although she said social distancing would continue, Birx expressed optimism that the United States would recover more quickly than earlier global data suggested.

“If you look at these outbreaks over time and you look at places like Louisiana,” Birx said, “if you look at Houston, if you look at Detroit, if you look at how they’ve reached their peak and come down and what those cases look like as they come down, it gives us great hope when you project out Boston and Chicago and certainly the New York metro.” Despite the encouraging data, Birx added that during conversations with governors about cautiously reopening, “they talk about this not as turning on a light switch, but slowly turning up the dimmer. Very slowly.” Birx defended Trump’s comments about ingesting disinfectants and using ultraviolet light as a potential coronavirus cure, saying that he was “musing” about a study on sunlight and that the media should move on. Birx went on to say that Trump’s remark was him thinking out loud about a study that found that sunlight killed aerosolized coronavirus particles.



During Friday’s briefing, Trump did not mention the study but instead walked back the remarks by telling reporters that his comment about disinfectants was sarcastic. Colorado Governor Jared Polis, a Democrat, defended his decision Sunday morning to start reopening his state. On CNN’s “State of the Union,” Polis said a recent apparent spike in cases was attributable to previous tests that were just confirmed and added to the total, and don’t reflect what is happening. He said he is focused on social distancing measures that are sustainable for weeks and months. Oklahoma Governor Kevin Stitt, a Republican, also defended his decision to begin reopening businesses in his state on Friday. Stitt said the original purpose of the closures was to build hospital

capacity, acquire personal protective equipment, and flatten the curve. The closures gave the government time to do so, he said, but it’s time to reopen. “The facts in our state are: March 30, we peaked in hospitalizations, with 560 across the state,” he said on “Fox News Sunday.” “Today we have 300 across the state in our hospitals. We think it’s time for a measured reopening.”



Kevin Hassett, an economist temporarily advising the administration on economic policy during the pandemic, painted a dire picture on Sunday. “Make no mistake, we’re looking at a really grave situation” in economic terms, he said on ABC News’s “This Week.” Over the past five weeks, more than 26 million Americans have filed unemployment claims. “This is the biggest negative shock that our economy, I think, has ever seen,” Hassett said. “We’re going to be looking at unemployment rates that we saw during the Great Depression.” He noted that during the recession that began in 2008, a total of 8.7 million jobs were lost. “Right now, we’re losing about that many jobs every 10 days,” Hassett said. “So the economic lift for policy makers is an extraordinary one.” Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said that contrary to some predictions, he expects a quick and robust economic recovery. “As we begin to reopen the economy in May and June, you’re going to see the economy really bounce back in July, August, September,” Mnuchin said on “Fox News Sunday.” “We are putting an unprecedented amount of fiscal relief into the economy.” Mnuchin also responded to criticism

that the federal relief program for small businesses had run out of money so quickly in part because large chunks of it had been taken up by large businesses. He said that larger companies are returning the money and that the next phase of the program will be more focused on smaller companies.



Republican and Democratic governors on Sunday, speaking on ABC News’ “This Week,” pushed back against the suggestion by Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell, Republican of Kentucky, last week that states hit hard by the coronavirus outbreak should be allowed to seek bankruptcy protections rather than be given a federal bailout. “It’s outrageous for Senator McConnell to even suggest that,” said Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat. “He’s wrong, and we need Congress to step up and help states. . . . It’s because of this global pandemic that we are all having to make tough decisions. We need the federal government to have our backs.” Maryland Governor Larry Hogan, a Republican and chairman of the National Governors Association, said the money is “critical to the rebounding of our economy.” He noted a bipartisan bill in the Senate would send \$500 billion to the states and “we have a commitment from the president and the vice president” to provide the support. “I thought Mitch McConnell probably would regret making that comment the other day — I think it just slipped out,” Hogan said, “but I’m hopeful that we will be able to convince Senator McConnell to go along with the bipartisan bill in the Senate and the administration’s commitment to the states.” (Courtesy <https://www.bostonglobe.com/>)



豐建偉醫師：歐美冠狀病毒，恐增高「腦中風」機率

【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】隨著哈裏斯郡地區口罩令生效，許多民衆對這項命令的反應褒貶不一，有人認為這是必要之舉，也有人抨擊美國人身自由盡失。針對口罩問題，休斯頓當地權威醫師豐建偉，從醫學的角度與民衆分析口罩的必要性。

借鏡上海，口罩、隔離最有效
豐建偉指出，雖然數據顯示這陣子疫情達到控制，然而仍然不能鬆懈。從醫學的角度與中國的例子借鏡，會發現如上海這樣的大城市，雖然人口密度高，實際確診人數卻不到600人，歸功於上海實施的社交隔離，以及民衆都自主配帶口罩，可見口罩是有其效用的。豐醫師也指出，目前帶口罩、社交隔離是兩項最有效的防疫手段。美國新冠患者，「腦中風」機率恐增加



青壯年在罹患新冠肺炎後，容易引起小血管的早期炎症反應、血管阻塞，進而提高「腦中風」的機率，這是當時在中國還未出現的跡象。因此美國的新冠病毒更毒，不管任何年齡層，都需要配戴口罩，以保護自身。

針對下列高危險族群，豐建偉也指出特別需要透過帶口罩來維繫身體健康：65歲以上長者、糖尿病患者、心力衰竭、腎功能異常、慢性肺病等並有慢性疾病、以及肥胖者都是感染新冠肺炎後的高危族群，務必在公眾場合攜帶口罩，保護自己。他也指出亞裔族群對於帶口罩的意識較強，然而除了自己做到以外，他呼籲亞裔透過自身影響力、輿論、媒體，來讓親友、鄰居、同事都意識到口罩的重要性，幫助社區恢復過去的平靜。
口罩是否能高溫消毒再利用？醫生解析
而針對坊間熱議的口罩是否能通過加溫、射線等方式消毒再利用的話題，豐建偉指出，雖然這對於特定類型的口罩是可行的，

但作為醫師並不建議這麼做。他表示雖然對於一般口罩或布口罩，的確可以透過高溫達到一定的殺菌效果，然而若在消毒過程中口罩產生破洞，反而功虧一簣。而醫用口罩N95，在設計上就是無法消毒的。因此建議民衆最好是一次性使用，不要因為省口罩的小錢，而失去身體健康。
抗疫黃金準則：增強自身免疫力
豐醫師也強調，要有效抵禦疫情最好的方式還是增強自身免疫力，他也提供了以下方針做為參考：第一，多吃高纖食物以及植物性蛋白，此外還要補充各種蔬果中的各類維生素，能有效抑制炎症反應，而肉類會增加炎症反應，要減少比例。此外也可以透過中醫食補等方式。第二，保持心情愉悅，勿累積過多壓力，並對身邊親友多點愛與包容。第三，透過進行長期的有氧運動，來促進代謝，也能增加腸胃消化道機能。

德州最高法院：租客「驅逐令」審判延期至5月18日



【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】隨著驅逐令時限將至，德州最高法院於28日宣布，要再次將驅逐聽證的凍結時間從4月30日延長至5月18日，讓許多因為疫情無法付出租金的租客能暫時鬆一口氣。根據這項命令，房東仍然可以在這段期間申請驅逐、向房客發出收租通知，但各種

審判、聽證會和其他程序仍然會被暫停，要到5月18日之後，法庭才會恢復舉行聽證會。隨著失業率上升並達到德州的歷史高位，上週五，州長艾伯特和德州住房與社區事務部宣布，該州將向符合條件的德州人提供1130萬美元的租金援助。一些地方政

府也採取了更強有力的行動來制止驅離。在叁月和四月的短短五週內，共有130萬1441名德州人申請了失業補助，超過了2019年全年的水平，住房問題也順勢成為成千上萬個低收入戶的大問題。

專家表示：依數據顯示，德州還沒有準備好重啓



【美南新聞記者蕭永群報導】德州的分階段重啓計畫已經逐漸展開，然而卻有專家指出，從目前的數據資料顯示，德州尚未做好重新開放的準備。貝勒醫學院（Baylor College of Medicine）知名疫苗和傳染病專家赫茲（Peter Hotez）博士指出，根據數據顯示，德州目前還不適重啓。「我們到目前所做的一切都是正確的，希望能確保我們不會將成果付之一炬。」赫茲認為州長格雷·艾伯特（Greg Abbott）的經濟復甦計畫是正確的，但缺乏保護公眾健康的措施。「到目前為止的問題是，他們疏忽了整個疫情將在幾週或幾個月內崩潰。」赫茲表示：

「我們在預測模型中指出可以安全地開放之前就選擇重啓，（但模型指出）要『等到六月』」在州長艾伯特宣布要解除居家令後，IHME模型預測德州死亡人數將會回升，且預計到八月，死亡人數將達到1657人，比上週幾乎翻了一倍。不管是否準備就緒，德州將在本周五5月1日邁出一大步，屆時餐館、電影院、零售商店和購物中心將有限度地重新開放。

霍茨說：「我理解我們必須按照他們所說的『開放』，我接受這一點。」「但是我唯一擔心和警告的是：要以聰明的方式開放。」赫茲表示，目前針對要讓德州安全開放的醫療基礎設施系統還沒建立好。「無論您是在律師事務所、Buc-ee加油站還是目標百貨工作，如果您想知道您的同事是否患有（冠狀病毒），我們都還沒有相應的系統。」