

COVID-19 Risks vs. Growth Continuum

COVID-19 is creating unprecedented health and economic challenges. Crisis response measures like social distancing, school and business closures, and shelter-in-place orders have been put in place to stop the spread of the disease, but come with costs. As America looks to long-term pandemic response the debate over tradeoffs is beginning, with some arguing for containment at all costs while others, like President Trump, want America back open for business and "raring to go." Below you can see where selected thought leaders stand on the COVID-19 risk versus growth continuum.

Contain COVID-19



Bill Gates, Founder of Microsoft

"It's very tough to say to people, 'Hey, keep going to restaurants, go buy new houses, ignore that pile of bodies over in the corner.'"



Dr. Scott Gottlieb, Former Food and Drug Administration Commissioner

"There's no such thing as a functioning economy... as COVID-19 continues to spread uncontrolled."



Maura Calsyn, Center for American Progress, Managing Director, Health Policy

"Halting social distancing efforts now would not only allow further spread of COVID-19, but it would also cause even greater long-term economic damage..."

Look for Balance



Dr. Anthony Fauci, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Director

"You can look at a date but you've got to be very flexible and on a literally day-by-day and week-by-week basis."



Paul Romer, World Bank Senior Vice President

"We need to shift within a couple of months to a targeted approach that limits the spread of the virus but still lets most people go back to work and resume their daily activities."



Arpit Gupta, New York University Assistant Professor of Finance

"Steep as they are, it's worth paying these costs to avoid even greater human tragedy. But eventually, we must consider ways to lift quarantines safely and get Americans back to work."

Get Back to Work



Lloyd Blankfein, Former Goldman Sachs CEO

"Extreme measures to flatten the virus 'curve' is sensible-for a time...But crushing the economy, jobs, and morale is also a health issue-and beyond."



Rick Santelli, CNBC Editor

"Maybe we'd be just better off if we gave it to everybody and then in a month it would be over."
"Because the mortality rate of this probably isn't going to be any different if we did it that way than the long-term picture, but the difference is we're wreaking havoc on global and domestic economies."



Jerry Falwell, Jr., President of Liberty University

Bucked trends and public health warnings by keeping Liberty University open and suggested COVID-19 could be a biological attack from China and North Korea or a political plot against Trump. "Impeachment didn't work, the Mueller report didn't work, Article 25 didn't work, maybe this is their next attempt to get Trump."