

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON SEAPOWER  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON PERSONNEL

COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON DISABILITY  
ASSISTANCE AND MEMORIAL AFFAIRS  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND  
INVESTIGATIONS

CONGRESSIONAL HISPANIC CAUCUS

CONGRESSIONAL ASIAN PACIFIC  
AMERICAN CAUCUS



## United States House of Representatives

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
39<sup>th</sup> District, California

WASHINGTON OFFICE:  
431 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4111

FULLERTON OFFICE:  
1440 NORTH HARBOR BOULEVARD, SUITE 601  
FULLERTON, CA 92835  
(714) 459-4575

DIAMOND BAR OFFICE:  
20995 PATHFINDER ROAD, SUITE 330  
DIAMOND BAR, CA 91765  
(909) 569-0525

WWW.CISNEROS.HOUSE.GOV  
FACEBOOK.COM/REPGILCISNEROS  
TWITTER: @REPGILCISNEROS

November 1, 2020

The Honorable Gavin Newsom  
Governor  
State of California  
California State Capitol, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, California 92814

Dear Governor Newsom:

I write to express my concerns regarding the continued closure of Knott's Berry Farm in Buena Park and the Disneyland Resort in Anaheim. I urge you and your reopening task force to reconsider the current guidelines for the reopening of amusement parks and engage directly with employees, business leaders, and community leaders in my district to address the inequity placed on my constituents in this industry and create a new strategy that will allow my constituents to get back to work safely.

I sincerely appreciate and share your commitment to health and safety. Your leadership and "health-first framework" has helped guide our state through an unprecedented crisis. I understand your hesitancy to allow large theme parks to reopen but disagree that amusement parks in our state are not capable of reopening safely until a vaccine is identified and widely accepted, as the parameters under your *Blueprint for a Safer Economy* almost assuredly guarantee. Your guidelines would permit the parks to reopen at 25% capacity once Orange County reaches the Yellow Tier. According to Orange County's Public Health Officer Clayton Chau, the Yellow Tier may not be obtainable until Summer of 2021. Keeping amusement parks closed through next year risks irreversible economic harm not only to our amusement parks, but the thousands of small businesses whose livelihoods will be destroyed forever, and assuring the loss of the billions of dollars in economic activity generated for our region.

This month, I had the privilege to tour both Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland's Downtown Disney District, and saw first-hand the various protocols these two long-standing institutions have implemented to keep visitors safe. Their commitment to evidence-based health and safety protocols - for guests and staff alike - was clear. Due to their high level of visibility in the community, both have taken following CDC, state, and local guidelines seriously and have implemented procedures that could serve as best practices for all industries across California. For example, Knott's Berry Farm has installed sneeze guards or clear plastic barriers where appropriate, increased hand sanitizer stations, required masks and social distancing on the premises, and installed temperature check stations before patrons can enter the park. Similarly, Disneyland has increased the number of accessible hand washing stations throughout their Downtown area, implemented technology to reduce guest/ employee interaction, and collaborated with local healthcare professionals such as Hoag to provide pre-entry screenings.

We know it is possible to find ways to reopen these types of facilities without risking a statewide coronavirus surge because we have seen examples across the nation and within our state of collaborative protocols implemented to keep local residents and visitors safe. For instance, Florida's Department of Health in Orange County has found no evidence of a major outbreak stemming from Walt Disney World when they allowed the park to open over the summer. In California, we have allowed other similar industries to open - from public parks and beaches to zoos and movie theaters - without some of the strict safety oversight already adopted by Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland. There is a gross inequity in singling out theme parks for closure when these very similar industries have been allowed to open without serious incident.

We are now in our eighth month living with COVID-19. Families and businesses have made tremendous sacrifices to meet health and safety needs, with many businesses closing their doors permanently under the economic strain and uncertainty as temporary shutdowns lingered for months. Knott's Berry Farm has already been forced to reduce their workforce by 4,000 coming into the holiday season in comparison to previous years. And the Disneyland Resort and Walt Disney World have collectively begun to release over 28,000 employees, heavily impacting the Anaheim workforce. The inequitable burden placed on the employees of Orange County theme parks is unfair and unsustainable.

If we are truly going to return to normalcy in the future, we must work with these longstanding institutions to ensure their continued existence beyond the pandemic for the sake of their employees, the regional economy, and our constituents. Therefore, I urge you to meet with our local business, labor leaders, and elected officials serving both Knott's Berry Farm and Disneyland Resort to determine a scientifically safe system to reopen under the Orange Tier. We must work together in response to the on-the-ground realities and needs of our community.

Thank you in advance for your serious consideration of this matter. Do not hesitate to let me know if you have any questions or need additional information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress