

Gov. Newsom on Thanksgiving: Count Your Many Restrictions

This Thanksgiving, Californians have a variety of onerous government restrictions to be thankful for. Near the top of the list (right under worship bans) come the restrictions on Thanksgiving itself.

The California Department of Public Health's latest "Guidance for Private Gatherings" imply the state is now the head of your household.

Here are some mandatory highlights:

—"All gatherings must be held outside."

—"Gatherings that include more than three households are prohibited."

—"As much as possible, any food or beverages at outdoor gatherings must be in single-serve disposable containers. If providing single-serve containers is not possible, food and beverages must be served by a person who washes or sanitizes their hands frequently, and wears a face covering."

And here are some recommendations and concessions:

—"Attendees may go inside to use restrooms as long as the restrooms are frequently sanitized."

—"Gatherings should be two hours or less."

—"The host should collect names of all attendees and contact information in case contact tracing is needed later."

What does this mean for your Thanksgiving feast? Let's review.

Eat outside.

Whether you live in Palm Springs (where the high on Thanksgiving was 92 degrees three years ago) or Bishop (where the Thanksgiving high was 30 degrees last year), you must eat outside. Poor Californians (particularly minorities) suffer the most, living as many do in dense apartment complexes, near homeless havens or in localized pollution zones. But rich Californians who spread banquets on their manicured lawns behind high fences suffer right along with them.

No more than three households.

If you and your two siblings visit your folks for Thanksgiving, it's illegal. If you invite your parents, in-laws and an international student, it's illegal. If you celebrate "Friendsgiving" with three other singles, it's illegal. If your entire extended family self-quarantines before visiting elderly grandparents to safely soothe their loneliness, it's illegal. If you invite someone who's depressed and lonely, but have already invited two other families, it is illegal.

Single-serving turkeys, please.

And if you absolutely insist on stuffing and mashed potatoes and sweet potato casserole and ham and green beans, have them served by someone equipped with a mask and frequent hand sanitizing. In fact, just try to make your party feel like a soup kitchen, not a family celebration.

The list of absurdities goes on. If you fly across the country, try to spend fewer than two hours with relatives you almost never see.

But it's not all bad.

The guidelines do allow you to use the restroom, though the government is now telling where and under what conditions you may do so. And you aren't absolutely required to take down names for the government, though you "should." I kid; that's

worse. Does California recognize the privacy of the home anymore?

Unless they think everyone should live in fear, those who created these rules possibly didn't think about their impacts on Thanksgiving dinners. But that's just the problem. Handing down broad mandates without thinking about how they affect the way ordinary citizens live their lives is elitist, irresponsible, unaccountable policymaking.

And none of this applies if you face off with police outside the California district attorney's office. What a far cry from George Washington's day, when he offered thanks "for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed."

This Thanksgiving, I'm thankful for the hope of Christ's return, when there will be no more sickness, dying or sadness, when the whole world will be ruled by perfect justice, and all the redeemed will lift up a cry of thanksgiving and glad worship to our sovereign Lord and King, Jesus. {eoa}

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