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Workers hold protest in West Palm Beach demanding South Florida reopen

Protesters hold signs along South Dixie Highway

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Protesters lined South Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach on Friday demanding Palm Beach County reopen.



By: [Linnie Supall](#)

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WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. — Some residents are still upset Palm Beach County was left out of the governor's Phase 1 plan to slowly reopen.

On Friday morning, demonstrators lined South Dixie Highway in West Palm Beach.

Protesters held signs that read, “We Need Our Freedom Back” and “Get Me Back to Work or Pay My Bills.”

“We need to pay our bills. We have mortgages. We have families to feed,” said Gus Ramirez, a small business owner who was part of the protest.

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Jobless claims across the country have climbed to a staggering 30 million with Florida among the hardest hit states.

“We need to keep the economy going. We need our jobs,” said Ramirez.

He said he's disappointed Palm Beach County has been left out of Florida's initial plan to reopen.

“Does that mean we're going to stay out of work because the doctors say that we're not ready to go out? We might not be ready. That does not mean that we cannot take precautions,” said Ramirez.

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Just 5 miles south of the protest, Lake Avenue in Lake Worth Beach remains quiet as several store fronts that contribute to the city's rich and vibrant culture remain closed.

“It's just terrible. I'm about to cry,” said Pelican Restaurant owner Tara Sami.

The chairs inside her restaurant have been empty for nearly seven weeks.

Sami now serves her Indian cuisine through a makeshift takeout window.

“At this moment there’s hardly any business ... I’ve been doing some family-style (dinners) on the weekends. My people are great in Lake Worth, so I have a big support,” said Sami.

She knows covering costs will be a challenge, but also concerned about the consequence of reopening business too soon.

"It's better for the government to take more time. It's safer instead of rushing and bringing everybody out and spreading more disease among each," said Sami. "I know I'm going through a tough time but safety is first."

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