

Attempt to Enjoin Governor Wolf's Shutdown Order Denied by PA Supreme Court

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In an effort to slow the transmission of COVID-19, Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf, on March 19, issued an executive order requiring all non-life sustaining businesses to close their physical locations effective March 21, 2020 at 12:01 am. The Governor extended the effective date of his order until 8:00 am on March 23. Prior to the time the order was to take effect, several groups filed an emergency injunction petition with the Pennsylvania Supreme Court challenging the statutory authority for, and constitutionality of, Governor Wolf's order. More specifically, the movants sought injunctive relief with respect to the executive order's applicability to the closure of law firms and the operation of licensed firearm dealers.

With respect to the motion that the closure of law firms infringed upon the Supreme Court's exclusive authority to regulate the practice of law, the motion was dismissed as moot following Governor Wolf's clarification that lawyers could access their offices to effectuate and participate in "court functions deemed essential by a president judge . . . or similar court directive." As to the motion that the closure of firearm dealers violates the United States and Pennsylvania Constitutional right to bear arms, the Court denied the requested relief without explanation, over a written dissent, in which three justices joined.

With these denials, Pennsylvania authorities proceeded with enforcement of Governor Wolf's shutdown order as of 8 am on March 23, 2020.

If you have any questions or would like more information, contact Jeffrey Stewart (stewartj@whiteandwilliams.com; 610.782.4904).

As we continue to monitor the novel coronavirus (COVID-19), White and Williams lawyers are working collaboratively to stay current on developments and counsel clients through the various legal and business issues that may arise across a variety of sectors. Read all of the updates [here](#).

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