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City Attorney Klein Issues Statement on Columbus' Approach to Dine Safe Ohio Order

Says rule of thumb for bars and restaurants is that there should be no more patrons than chairs

COLUMBUS – Today, Columbus City Attorney Zach Klein issued the following statement on the state's Dine Safe Ohio order and cases referred to the City Attorney's Office for review:

“As we all work to operate under the Governor's new orders, we have to take time to educate and inform. Our education-first, citation-second approach will help explain the new rules to residents and businesses and will give them time to cooperate and comply before filing citations. The reality is, we're all in uncharted, uncomfortable territory and these new orders can be complex. Overall, we need to use common sense to support businesses and their employees, keep employees and patrons safe, and protect public health.

“The state's Dine Safe Ohio order states, ‘Customers must be seated when consuming food, beer, wine and liquor on the premises of the business.’ This is perhaps the most important part of the order because it essentially means that all patrons must be seated while at an establishment, unless using the restroom or entering/exiting. Thus, a good rule of thumb for businesses is that there should be no more patrons than there are seats at properly distanced tables. Additionally, if patrons refuse to comply with this requirement, it is the responsibility of the establishment to ask them to leave the premises. If the patron fails to leave upon being asked, that individual could be charged with trespassing.

“Regarding Standard Hall, we are still gathering photos, body camera footage and all evidence and facts in order to make a determination of how to move forward. After information has been collected and fully reviewed, we will proceed with appropriate action, if warranted. We will continue to examine every incident referred to our office thoroughly and on a case-by-case basis to ensure fairness and compliance.”

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