



BARRY GLASSMAN

HARFORD COUNTY EXECUTIVE

This is an unusual message, but 2020 has been an unusual year.

As a native son of Harford County, and after six years as county executive, I believe we need to take this moment to look at what we've been going through and the best path forward.

COVID-19 is a public health and economic crisis. Lives have been lost. Families are being stricken by a virus they hadn't heard of when the year began. Businesses struggle as statewide mandates restrict their operations. Add to this a deep political divide not seen since the Civil War. Then there's social media, which connects us, but is too often used as a weapon. Attacks provoke counterattacks. No one's mind is changed, but hearts are hardened. Online bullies poison the air for everyone, including those watching from the sidelines - especially our children. Finally, the perfect storm of 2020 has brought tragic news of suicide among young and old alike.

How do we turn the tide?

As we await the vaccine, we must do what public health officials say is our best defense. Yes, their advice has changed as understanding of COVID-19 has evolved. It may change again. Data is incomplete and sometimes inconclusive. None of that justifies avoiding reasonable and simple steps to help save lives: wear a mask, keep your distance, wash your hands and stay away from crowds.

Keep checking on your neighbors, your co-workers, and those close to you. Ask how they're doing and strengthen your connections. We need them now more than ever.

To those struggling with loneliness, despair or addiction: you belong to our community and we don't want to lose you. Reach out. Help is available from family, friends and The Klein Family Harford Crisis Center hotline, 1-800-NEXT-STEP.

Buy local. Local businesses create jobs and give back to our community. We have waived some local regulations and granted millions of dollars in federal CARES Act funding to keep small businesses open, but there is no substitute for paying customers.

Last, but not least, if you're on social media and others are lashing out, do not stay silent. The great majority of us reject this vitriol, but we must make our voices heard. Be the first in your circle to call for civility and others will follow. Visit our [Choose Civility Harford County website](#) for resources.


The bottom line is this: I know this county, I love this county, and I believe in us. We've overcome challenges before and we know how to do it again: take personal responsibility, look after each other, and be kind to every kind.

It's the Harford County way.

Thanks & God Bless,

Barry Glassman
Harford County Executive

 Like us on Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/HarfordCountyMD> | 

 Follow us on Twitter [@HarfordCountyMD](https://twitter.com/HarfordCountyMD)

###