

Assemblyman Joaquin Arambula's statement to GV Wire:

“I will not engage in a back-and-forth about last week’s encounters, nor will I engage in other people’s attempts to politicize events or deflect from the COVID-19 crisis while the virus continues to spread throughout Fresno County.

“I want to focus on the issues that gravely concern me as a doctor, who has seen thousands of people in Fresno County afflicted with COVID-19 as well as people dying from it. I am asking questions because these are the questions I’ve heard from the community regarding transparency and an inability to participate in public discussions. We believe there is a lack of urgency from Fresno County Supervisors to fight this pandemic. In particular, this lack of urgency is impacting essential workers, from the fields to packing houses to health care facilities and other jobs deemed “essential.” Specifically, it is harming our most vulnerable people who live in our rural communities.

“The county received federal CARES Act funds in April. Except for a small portion, county leaders have yet to formalize a cohesive plan and execute it. Fresno County has been on the state’s list of monitored counties for weeks because of its coronavirus numbers. I and others still believe the county should call an emergency public meeting so that the public’s voices can be heard and actions taken to appropriate funds. Our taxpayer dollars should be spent on people while they are alive.

“I also am concerned about how the surge in COVID-19 could trigger using the alternate care site at the Exhibit Hall in Fresno. We know our local hospitals are at capacity and understaffed. I want to know more about the plan for that site if it goes into operation.

“On Monday, the California Latino Legislative Caucus sent a letter to Gov. Newsom recommending actions to address the perilous and disproportionate impact that COVID-19 is having on the health of Latinos in our state, and it cited Fresno County’s allocation of funds as an issue. In part, the letter said: ‘Vigilant oversight is critical to ensure that all appropriated funds are properly spent on those in need, that no specific demographic of residents is denied funding, and that there be transparency on all public expenditures.’ I deeply appreciate the letter and its purpose.

“I reiterate that I offer to assist in any way I can to slow the spread of this horrible virus in our county. For me, it comes down to this: as a doctor and as a public servant, I took an oath to protect and to serve. We need to start working together to meet this challenge.”