

# Sen. Lee discusses COVID-19 during AHS virtual dinner/dance

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Sen. Mike Lee, R-Utah, speaks during a town hall meeting at the Davis County Library in Farmington on Tuesday, Feb. 18, 2020. | Scott G Winterton, Deseret News



American Heritage School

AHS Patriot Cowboy Family Dinner/Dance

AMERICAN FORK — Utah Sen. Mike Lee described the COVID-19 pandemic as “2 parts biological and 2 or 3 parts governmental” during a virtual visit to a private school in American Fork on Wednesday night.

“I say that not as a criticism toward the government response to the coronavirus but rather as a stark reality of the fact that in order to deal with the biology we have to deal with the social and governmental circumstances in which we find ourselves. At times, those things themselves can be very difficult and can compound the problem,” he said.

Lee made the comments during a virtual dinner/dance at the faith-based American Heritage School where he appeared as the guest speaker. Parents and students shared recipes and learned country line dances via Zoom as a way to reconnect and strengthen their school community. Many of his remarks struck religious tones.

The Republican senator also talked about how he’s doing his job since going into self-isolation at home in Utah on March 22 after being exposed to the virus at a meeting with Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., in Washington, D.C. Lee joked his lunch with Paul was “in some ways the costliest lunch I ever had with anyone,” but that he has no symptoms or sign of any disease.

Lee also talked about efforts to help The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints bring missionaries serving abroad back to the United States and Canada as well as a friend of his daughter living in a foreign country.

Throughout history, people have dealt with trials like the current global health crisis, and during such times it’s important to look heavenward for answers “because there are no clear ones here based on our earthly, mortal understanding,” he said.

“In the meantime, some of the things that governments are doing to try to make this better while, well-intentioned, are at times things that we have to worry about,” Lee said. “This is a crisis that is maybe 2 parts biological and 2 or 3 parts governmental.”

Lee said being a U.S. senator is like being anything else right now. Every day, he said, feels like a year or more and that sometimes he loses track of what’s happening from one day to the next.

“We’re walking into uncharted waters and to situations for which there is no clear precedent,” he said.

The two-term senator said he has spent enormous amounts of time on his cellphone, requiring him to recharge the battery multiple times a day so it doesn’t die in midsentence.

Many people from Utah, not just missionaries, have found themselves in difficult circumstances all over the world, Lee said. “And in many cases, we’ve had to use channels that we don’t normally use in order to get people out.”

Lee didn’t go into detail but said “we’ve had to pull out a lot of stops” to get people out of some places where they would have otherwise been in impossible, untenable circumstances.

A few days ago, his daughter Eliza called late at night telling him her friend couldn’t get out of a small, “far-flung country,” he said. Lee said he woke up members of his staff in Washington and they all worked together to get the person out.

People, now more than ever, need to be reminded of the greatness of the United States, and that even in times of tribulation and uncertainty, there is still a Constitution, “a document written by the hands of wise men raised up by Almighty God to that very purpose,” he said.

“We cannot lose sight of that, even now — especially now. It’s in these moments where we prove whether we are a people capable of, and deserving of, living in freedom,” Lee said. “I hope — I expect — that we will continue to prove that to ourselves, to each other, and most importantly to Almighty God.”