

Did the governor break her own rules?

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[ALBUQUERQUE, N.M.](#) (KRQE) –Did Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham play by her own rules during the public health order? KRQE News 13 has learned in April, when she ordered non-essential businesses to shut down and lectured all New Mexicans to stay home, a non-essential business opened up so she could buy jewelry and have it delivered to her.

In early April, Gov. Lujan Grisham stressed that New Mexicans needed to stay home and should only go out for essential items such as food. She also announced that all non-essential businesses were closed. “We are in really tough financial times as a state. It mirrors the incredible, personal sacrifices that happen every single day because people have limited their ability to work, telecommuting and many people, in fact, have lost their jobs,” said [Gov. Lujan Grisham on April 3rd](#).

However, just days after the April 3rd news conference and a week before Easter, KRQE News 13 has learned that Gov. Lujan Grisham called an employee at Lilly Barrack on Paseo to buy expensive jewelry. The jewelry was bought over the phone, but the employee went to the store, got the jewelry and placed it outside the door of the store where someone who knew the governor picked it up. This is according to the person who runs Lilly Barrack stores. She says she didn’t know about it until after it happened. She also said no one was allowed in the stores at that time due to the public health order.

The governor refused an on-camera interview but has a different version of the story. In an email from a governor spokesman, he says that “Lujan Grisham did call an employee, saying they had a longstanding personal relationship. The employee came here [Lilly Barrack], got the jewelry and took it home, left it outside their home and then someone came and picked it up.”

The governor’s office first said it was a campaign staffer, then later told KRQE it was the governor’s friend, but wouldn’t release a name. They also said the transaction was entirely contact-less, remote and permissible.

The spokesman also pointed to the governor’s order at the time stating “none of the state’s public health orders have restricted the conduct of business

operations in which an employee only interacts with clients or customers remotely.” However, that same order also states it requires the closure of physical retail spaces and doesn’t mention anything about home delivery.

In a time of non-essential closures where curbside was not allowed, KRQE asked if home delivery was okay. The governor’s spokesman said it was not a home delivery and businesses were encouraged to find creative ways to conduct business safely. He also added the store was not opened for the governor and stated that “turning the key inside a door to ‘open’ a store wouldn’t violate the order...” He also said non-essential businesses all across the state let employees in to do inventory or clean.

Other businesses like Mark Diamond’s Jewelers did not interpret the orders the way the governor’s office did. A manager at Gertrude Zachary says no one was allowed in their store and they wouldn’t even risk it because of a fear of fines. They thought online sales through shipping was their only option, but they got zero customers and lost hundreds of thousands in sales.

KRQE News 13 asked about the two people who left their homes to get jewelry to the governor. Her office says this was an unusual transaction and while “of course the governor has been telling people to stay home to the greatest extent possible, it also true she’s been urging New Mexicans to find ways to support local businesses.”

So could you have called up a store and received this kind of service during the pandemic? The governor’s office says if a New Mexican has that kind of personal relationship with a local business and local businesses are trying to operate creatively to keep themselves and their employees afloat while staying safe, certainly this kind of transaction could have occurred.

KRQE News 13 also talked to the manager of Ooh Ahh Jewelry in Nob Hill. She said they did online sales only with one person in the shop who shipped orders out and didn’t do home or curbside deliveries because it wasn’t part of the April public health orders. [Curbside delivery wasn’t allowed until May 1.](#)