



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on November 19, 2020

Republican Governors in Texas, Florida, South Dakota Not Considering Lockdowns

While cities and states across the country are scrambling to impose more draconian COVID mandates and force Americans to relive the horror of early pandemic mitigation efforts, Texas, Florida, and South Dakota have assured their citizens that they will not be returning to or implementing new lockdowns.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott said last week that he has ruled out “any more lockdowns,” instead focusing on helping those who have COVID “to heal.”

“We are not going to have any more lockdowns in the state of Texas,” Abbott told Dallas radio host Mark Davis on Thursday. “Our focal point is gonna be working to heal those who have COVID, get them out of hospitals quickly, make sure they get back to their normal lives.”

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Rather, Abbott will [stay the course](#) on his reopening plan, which has allowed retail, restaurants, and offices to expand to 75 percent capacity, permits hospitals to open elective procedures, and opens nursing homes for visitations. Abbott will only consider shutdowns on a regional basis if the number of COVID-19 patients “exceeds 15% of its hospital capacity for seven consecutive days,” the *Texas Tribune* reports. Regions that reach that threshold will be required to reduce occupancy back down to 50 percent of total capacity, at that point.

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As noted by the *Tribune*, Abbott’s response to the rising COVID figures in his state is a marked change from June, when Abbott shut down bars and reduced restaurant capacity after Texas had reported 5,102 people had been hospitalized with the virus.

Predictably, local officials are unhappy with Abbott’s restraint and are asking for more authority to impose harsher “safety restrictions.”

“We need the state to step in and lead or get out of the way and let us lead,” Harris County Judge Lina Hidalgo told reporters Tuesday.

But Abbott notes that despite the rising number of cases, Americans are more equipped to handle the virus today. A new antibody drug, Eli Lilly and Co.’s bamlanivimab, is being distributed to Texas hospitals this week, he said, and the Regeneron antibody cocktail that quickly healed President Trump will soon follow.



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Abbott added that those treatments, along with the coming vaccines, mean Texans have entered “the ninth inning of our challenge with COVID.”

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis is not considering any more shutdowns, as they “hurt families who can’t afford to shelter in place for six weeks,” a spokesperson for the governor said in a statement to CBS12 on Monday:

“Especially not for a virus that has a 99.8 percent survival rate,” he added.

DeSantis issued a statewide stay-at-home order in April but Florida moved into Phase 3 of its reopening plan in September. At this stage, businesses are open and there are no longer limitations on gatherings. Local governments cannot impose new restrictions without providing justification and assessing the costs of doing so. Florida does not have a statewide mask mandate.

And despite DeSantis’ hands-off approach, [statewide hospital bed capacity](#) is at just above 20 percent, according to Florida’s Agency for Healthcare Administration. Statewide ICU bed capacity also hovers around 20 percent.

In South Dakota, first-term Governor Kristi Noem has been praised by libertarians and constitutionalists for exercising restraint throughout the pandemic and reiterated her preference for avoiding lockdowns and mask mandates in a tweet last week. “We already know that lockdowns DON’T stop the spread of the virus. However, they destroy small businesses and jobs, and they make it difficult for families to put food on the table,” she wrote.

And when reporters asked whether cases in South Dakota were on the rise because there was not statewide mask mandate, she pointed out that cases were on the rise everywhere, including in states with statewide mask mandates.

“There are 41 states that have some kind of a mask mandate. Cases are on the rise in 39 of those 41 states. Now some in the media are saying that South Dakota is the worst in the world right now and that is absolutely false.”

Noem also told reporters that even without lockdowns or mask mandates, South Dakota has the seventh lowest rate of fatality in the country.

Noem asserts that she does not have authority to require mask-wearing but rather prefers to equip her constituents with the available information required for them to make their own decisions. She also chastised the campaigns to shame non-mask wearers.

“I’m going to continue to trust South Dakotans to make wise and well-informed decisions for them and for their families,” she said. “And I’m also reiterating my request that we all continue to show each other respect and understanding for everybody who makes choices that we may or may not agree with. And I ask that we all trust each other and remember that we’re all human beings working to get through this challenge together.”

Meanwhile, in spite of the [lack of evidence](#) supporting a return to lockdowns, despite the emergence of promising [antibody treatments](#), and even with [vaccines on the horizon](#) for those who are interested, many governors in states across the country are moving toward stricter restrictions.

Governor Mike DeWine is imposing a statewide curfew in Ohio from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., he announced on Twitter. DeWine also asked Ohio citizens to “do at least one thing that reduces your contact with others.” In an apparent effort to boost morale, he followed his tweet up with the overused “in this together” mantra.



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California Governor Gavin Newsom announced this week he was “pulling the emergency brake” on reopening plans and placed most of his state back under the strictest coronavirus restrictions, NBC News reports.

“To slow the spread, 41 counties — 94 percent of California’s population — will now be in purple, the most restrictive tier,” Newsom tweeted.

Notably, Newsom was recently [exposed](#) for attending a November 6 party in Napa at which unmasked guests from multiple households were present, all of which are in violation of his state’s restrictions.

Illinois Governor J.B. Pritzker announced stay-at-home advisories in Chicago and suburban Cook County this week, as well.



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