



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on May 29, 2021

Idaho Gov. Little Repeals “Irresponsible” Mask Ban Imposed by Lt. Gov. McGeachin While He Was Out of State

Idaho’s ban on local COVID-19 mask mandates lasted just one day, as Governor Brad Little (R) revoked an executive order issued by his lieutenant Janice McGeachin (R) while he was traveling out of state and rebuked her for “irresponsible abuse of power” and a “self-serving stunt.”

McGeachin’s order issued on Thursday [stated](#): “Neither the state nor a political subdivision may mandate that an individual in this state must wear a face mask, face shield or other face covering for the purpose of preventing or slowing the spread of a contagious or infectious disease.”



Idaho Lt. Gov. Janice McGeachin announcing her candidacy for governor (AP Images)

The order also mentioned that because of the serious concerns over the short- and long-term negative effect of mask wearing, the mask mandates maintained by the health districts, public schools, and political subdivisions of the state fail to serve a public health and safety purpose and unnecessarily restrict rights and liberties of the people and businesses.

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Governor Little reversed the decision and said that although he never issued a statewide mask mandate, he did not believe in taking power away from local officials to put out health guidelines that they see fit.

“For the record, though, I have opposed a statewide mask mandate all along because I don’t think top-down mandates change behavior the way personal choice does,” Little [said](#).

“But, as your Governor, when it came to masks, I also didn’t undermine separately elected officials who, under Idaho law, are given authorities to take measures they believe will protect the health and safety of the people they serve,” he added.

Little went on to slam McGeachin, who has [announced](#) she will be running against Little for the governor’s position.

“How ironic that the action comes from a person who has groused about tyranny, executive overreach, and balance of power for months,” Little said. “The executive order also conflicts with other laws on the books,” Little stated. “This is why you do your homework, Lt. Governor.”

Little was one of the few governors, even among Republicans, who refused to issue a statewide mask mandate during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Seven counties and 11 cities, including Boise, require wearing masks in public in a bid to slow the spread of COVID-19. A bill seeking to ban mask mandates was [introduced](#) in the Idaho state legislature in March, with its sponsors arguing that forcing healthy individuals to wear face covering caused physical and emotional and even mental injuries to people’s health.



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The activists have held dozens of [demonstrations](#) burning masks in defiance of local mandates, with McGeachin and at least three state legislators [reportedly](#) attending the protests.

Shortly after Little issued his executive order nullifying hers, McGeachin fired back on Twitter with a [statement](#), saying Little had rejected conservative solutions.

“I understand that protecting individual liberty means fighting against tyranny at ALL levels of government — federal, state, and local,” she wrote. “It is your God-given right to make your own health decisions, and no state, city, or school district ever has the authority to violate your unalienable rights.”

McGeachin also [responded](#) to Little’s accusation of her “abusing the power,” saying the tyranny happened ... when you forced businesses to shut down, ordered healthy Idahoans to stay at home, and prevented us from being able to worship freely.”

On Friday, Little proved McGeachin’s assumption, and [issued](#) sharp criticism of the state Legislature’s efforts to repeal a COVID-19 emergency declaration and thus strip him of the emergency powers.

“I believe in my heart that what the Idaho Legislature is doing is harmful to our people and wrong for Idaho,” Little said, adding, “I urge my partners in the Legislature to stop the political games and do what is right for the people of Idaho.”

He also warned that the emergency declaration is “critical” to the Gem State’s ability to receive federal aid.

Tensions have been rising in the state since October, when McGeachin and several Republican state legislators or legislators-to-be appeared in a [video](#) in which they blasted the governor’s emergency orders, with a central message being, “The fact that a pandemic may or may not be occurring changes nothing about the meaning or intent of the state constitution and the preservation of our inalienable rights.”

In her recent [interview](#) with *The New American*, McGeachin criticized Little for egregious actions in response to the pandemic, including restrictions of religious rights, business lockdowns, and quarantines of the healthy people. She said all of this constitutes an attack on our constitutional, republican form of government that Little had no authority to do.



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