



Wyoming Is Latest GOP-led State to End Most COVID Mandates

Wyoming is the latest Republican-led state to end most of its COVID-19 mandates, allowing businesses to open at full capacity starting on March 16 and removing the state's mask requirements.

"I thank the people of Wyoming for their commitment to keeping one another safe throughout this pandemic," Wyoming Governor Mark Gordon said in a [press release](#). "It is through their efforts that we have kept our schools and businesses operating and our economy moving forward. I ask all Wyoming citizens to continue to take personal responsibility for their actions and stay diligent as we look ahead to the warmer months and to the safe resumption of our traditional spring and summer activities."



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Gordon's announcement lifts the state's mask mandate and permits all businesses to open at full capacity, but will leave in place some other COVID measures, including a mask mandate on all elementary through high schools, CNN reports.

"With this approach we can have graduations, proms and a great end to the school year by keeping schools open. Especially since our children will not have the chance to be vaccinated this spring," Gordon asserts.

But support for mask requirements continues to be [challenged](#), particularly for children. Dr. Lee Merritt, a spine surgeon who graduated from the University of Rochester Medical School, asserts masks interfere with children's development.

"Besides what they're doing to society as a whole, separating us, isolating us, think about what they're doing to our children," she said. "Children need to look at faces to learn how to be a human. Reading faces is part of humanity — interacting with people. We are creating a generation of children that have an inchoate fear of things ... children who are afraid of their environment."

Similarly, Dr. Brett Enneking, a child psychologist at Riley Children's Health, contends mask requirements will have short- and long-term effects on children by stunting parts of their brains connected to emotional and intellectual development.

"Children, especially in early childhood, they use the mouth as part of the entire face to get a sense of what's going on around them in terms of adults and other people in their environment as far as their emotions. It also has a role in language development as well," Dr. Enneking told News 8.

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Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on March 9, 2021

Gordon cites the prevalence of the state's vaccinations as the motivation behind his decision to lift the regulations, but continues to encourage Wisconsin residents to take personal responsibility by continuing to "wear face coverings in indoor public spaces and to follow the best practices adopted by any business they visit to slow the spread of the virus."

Gordon's move follows similar announcements out of Texas and Mississippi last week to end most of those states' COVID-related mandates, including mask requirements and capacity limitations. Both governors also cite vaccine administration as evidence that the states no longer require stringent mandates.

"We now have vaccines," Texas Governor Greg Abbott said last week, noting Texas' one-day record of vaccine administration on Tuesday. Approximately 5.7 million Texans have received the vaccine as of last week, Breitbart News reports.

"By the end of March, every senior who wants a vaccine should be able to get one," he continued. "The vaccine supply continues to increase so rapidly that more and more Texans will soon be eligible to receive a vaccine."

Mississippi Governor Tate Reeves made a similar declaration.

"Our hospitalizations and case numbers have plummeted, and the vaccine is being rapidly distributed," Reeves [tweeted](#). "It is time!"

"Executive orders that interfered with peoples' lives were the worst, but the only possible, intervention for much of the last year," Reeves said. "Now, we are putting our focus towards rapid vaccine distribution. We are getting out of the business of telling people what they can and cannot do."

Arkansas Governor Asa Hutchinson announced on Sunday he would lift the state's mask mandate at the end of the month if the state met case and hospitalization thresholds, UPI reports.

Predictably, these states have faced backlash for their actions. President Biden said last week it was a "big mistake" for states to remove their COVID mandates.

"The last thing we need is 'Neanderthal' thinking that in the meantime everything is fine, take off your mask, forget it," Biden said. "It still matters."

California Governor Gavin Newsom audaciously called Abbott's announcement "[absolutely reckless](#)" in a tweet, despite Newsom's current [recall threat](#) resulting from his own mishandling of the pandemic.

But studies continue to reveal that the COVID measures may not have been nearly as effective as they were originally reported to be. A National Bureau of Economic Research working paper [concludes](#) that non-pharmaceutical interventions such as lockdowns and mask mandates do not affect virus transmission rates.



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