

State Governors Drop Mask Mandates, Including Texas

Gov. Greg Abbott has lifted all mask mandates and business restrictions for the state of Texas. He is one of several governors who have made such announcements in the new year.

I just announced Texas is OPEN 100%.

EVERYTHING.

I also ended the statewide mask mandate.

– Greg Abbott (@GregAbbott_TX) March 2, 2021

His executive order, the details of which he announced in a Lubbock restaurant, contained a word of caution for Texans:

“Make no mistake, COVID-19 has not disappeared, but it is clear from the recoveries, vaccinations, reduced hospitalizations, and safe practices that Texans are using that state mandates are no longer needed. Today’s announcement does not abandon safe practices that Texans have mastered over the past year,” Abbott said.

He also encouraged Texans to remember their duties to care for one another saying “each person has a role to play in their own personal safety and the safety of others.”

He continued, “With this executive order, we are ensuring that all businesses and families in Texas have the freedom to determine their own destiny.”

Like the rest of the country, Texas has seen the number of cases and deaths plunge, The Associated Press reports. Hospitalizations are at the lowest levels since October, and the seven-day rolling average of positive tests has dropped to

about 7,600 cases, down from more than 10,000 in mid-February.

Abbott says this is due to more Texans recovering from COVID-19 than contracting it.

Following suit, Mississippi state Gov. Tate Reeves announced he is ending all state-wide imposed restrictions as well.

Starting tomorrow, we are lifting all of our county mask mandates and businesses will be able to operate at full capacity without any state-imposed rules. Our hospitalizations and case numbers have plummeted, and the vaccine is being rapidly distributed. It is time!

– Tate Reeves (@tatereeves) March 2, 2021

Tate lauded the state's economic recovery throughout the pandemic.

We've been among the 4 or 5 most open states throughout this crisis, and we've been rewarded for it with more jobs and economic recovery. That's not because what we put in place was a light burden. It's only because the rest of the country was so harsh. That's good, but...

– Tate Reeves (@tatereeves) March 2, 2021

Iowa Gov. Kim Reynolds lifted restrictions for Iowans in early February, and echoing the sentiments of her colleagues, stressed the importance of supporting businesses as well as citizens.

"We need to make sure that we're doing everything that we can to protect Iowans, especially our most vulnerable," the Republican governor said in an interview. "But I also have to balance economies that support the individuals that are trying to sustain a business or sustain their livelihood."

She continued, "If we start to see any increase [in cases], we'll adjust accordingly. And Iowans know I'll do that. I've said I'll dial back."

North Dakota Republican Gov. Doug Burgum dropped his November mask mandate in January, and Montana Gov. Greg Gianforte followed suit in February. {eo}

Follow breaking news like this and more in our new platform, CHARISMA PLUS.