

Utah Legislation to Ban Public School Mask Mandate for Next School Year

Utah's mask mandate expired April 10, except for gatherings of more than 50 people and in K-12 schools, but that is about to change.

The Utah legislature has made a bold move by banning mask mandates from all public schools starting for the 2021-2022 school year.

The Utah House Bill 1007 "prohibits an institution of higher education from requiring a face covering to participate in, or attend instruction, activities or in any other place on the campus of the institution after the end of the spring semester in 2021."

Educational institutions can not require proof of vaccination for attendance unless they also allow for exemptions for medical reasons, as well as personal and religious beliefs.

Republican State Rep. Val Peterson, who sponsored the bill, told the Associated Press, "At some point this has to end. What this bill is really about is making sure we have those assurances to our students that they can go forward next fall and get right into the school year without the thought of masks and what that might mean."

The legislation successfully passed the house with a vote of 50-24 and made it through the state Senate 23-5. It is now expected to be signed into law by Republican Gov. Spencer Cox who, in a May 13 press briefing, told Utah schools that they can go mask free the last week of this 2020-2021 school year. He said that this will "give kids an opportunity to see their teachers, to see their friends, to spend that last week

together without masks, if they so choose.”

The governor also commented in his statement that, “If you go into a business and they are requiring you to wear a mask, wear a mask. If you’re not comfortable with indoor dining, order takeout. We need a measure of grace and patience with each other. We have to treat each other with respect.” {eoa}

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