

THE EPOCH TIMES



Vanessa Zubia-Meza and her mother Margie Zubia are pictured in the window of their new restaurant called El Paseo in downtown El Paso, Texas on May 18, 2020. (Paul Ratje/AFP via Getty Images)

AMERICA

No Surge in COVID Two Weeks After Mask Mandate Lifted in Texas

BY MEILING LEE | March 26, 2021 Updated: March 26, 2021

A **A** Print

After two weeks of lifting its mask mandate and allowing businesses to open at full capacity, [Texas](#) is not seeing a surge of new [COVID-19](#) cases.

Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican, issued an executive order ([pdf](#)) that went into effect on March 10 to loosen COVID-19 restrictions. Although the government's statewide mask mandate was lifted, individual businesses were still able to "limit capacity" or impose mask mandates at their own choosing.

But in Austin and Travis County, residents 10 years or older still have to wear a mask outside their home after a district judge refused to grant Attorney General Ken Paxton a [restraining order](#) that would have ended a mask mandate enforced

Ken Paxton a [resurfacing order](#) that would have ended a mask mandate enforced by Travis County and Austin city officials. The trial is set to take place on March 26.

Texas had been witnessing a downward trend in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations prior to Abbott's announcement ending the restrictions.

COVID-19 is the disease caused by the [CCP \(Chinese Communist Party\) virus](#).

The Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) posted on Twitter yesterday that Texas saw a seven-day average decrease in the daily number of new cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

#COVID19TX Update: Texans are slowing the spread with vaccines and #HealthyTexas steps. Keep it up to stop variants from reversing our progress.

In the last 7 days #Texas averaged:

↓2,556 new cases a day

↓3,581 current hospitalizations

↓122 new fatalities reported a day pic.twitter.com/QXh4UWtOsY

— Texas DSHS (@TexasDSHS) [March 24, 2021](#)

At the time the executive order was issued, March 2, new COVID-19 cases in the state stood at [7,240 cases](#), with a seven-day average of 7,259 cases. That number dropped to 5,350 cases by March 10 when the executive order came into effect and the economy fully opened.

Two weeks later on March 24, the number of daily new cases stands at 3,827, with a seven-day average of 3,401 cases.

Texas Governor Greg Abbott arrives for his COVID-19 press conference at the Texas State Capitol in Austin on March 29, 2020. (Tom Fox-Pool/Getty Images)

Abbott **included** in his order a provision for county judges across the state's 22 hospital regions to "use COVID-19 mitigation strategies" if hospitalizations rise over 15 percent of "hospital bed capacity" for seven straight days.

"County Judges may not impose jail time for not following COVID-19 orders nor may any penalties be imposed for failing to wear a face mask. If restrictions are imposed at a county level, those restrictions may not include reducing capacity to less than 50% for any type of entity," he added.

Abbott's mask mandate rollback had attracted criticism from high-profile figures, including California Gov. Gavin Newsom and Dr. Anthony Fauci, a top adviser to President Joe Biden.

"We understand people's need to get back to normal, and we're going in that direction. But when you start doing things like completely putting aside all public health measures as if you're turning a light switch off that's quite risky," Fauci said

health measures as if you're turning a light switch on, that's quite risky," Tate said during an appearance on CNN earlier this month. "We don't want to see another surge, and that's inviting one when you do that."

Mississippi also announced it was lifting COVID-19 related restrictions on March 2.

"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," Republican Gov. Tate Reeves said on [Twitter](#). "Our hospitalizations and case numbers have plummeted, and the vaccine is being rapidly distributed. It is the time!"

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In Mississippi, new COVID-19 cases have also been steadily declining but not as much as in Texas.

There were 301 cases with a seven-day average of 582 on March 2. Two weeks later, Mississippi had 387 new cases and a seven-day average of 289 cases.

The state's death toll is significantly lower than Texas, with four deaths on March 24 and a seven-day average of 6 deaths.

Texas saw 163 deaths on the same day, with a seven-day average of 123. This is down from March 10 which saw 202 deaths and a seven-day average of 190 deaths. Texas has around ten times the population of Mississippi.

At the time of publishing, more than six million Texan residents and 720,607 Mississippians have received at least one dose of the COVID-19 vaccine.