

Virginia surpasses 500,000 COVID-19 cases: A product of the “herd immunity” policies of the state’s Democratic Party government

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Late last month, Virginia topped 500,000 COVID-19 cases. According to an *InsideNoVa* report from January 31, the state has increased its count from 400,000 earlier in the month. Indicative of the acceleration of sickness as states across the country recklessly reopen schools and businesses, the report notes that this happened within a span of 19 days.

According to the Virginia Department of Health, the state has registered nearly 520,000 cases. Additionally, there have been over 6,500 deaths since March. Based on the current rate of new infections, the state will most likely record 600,000 cases before the end of the month.

This situation will be exacerbated by the homicidal policy of reopening schools now being spearheaded by the Democratic Party. According to a local *Fox News* affiliate, Virginia Democratic Governor Ralph Northam stated, “All of our school divisions need to be making plans about how to reopen schools” in the near future.

In the heavily populated suburbs of northern Virginia there have been almost 92,000 cases of COVID-19. Fairfax County, where officials have announced plans to reopen K-8 schools on February 16, has had almost 39,000 cases, resulting in over 600 deaths.

On Thursday, Alexandria City Public Schools officials announced they too would plan to reopen classes to their 16,000 students on February 16. This follows both Fairfax County and Loudoun County, which combine for a total of 270,000 students between them. Arlington County recently announced plans to keep its students online, with Superintendent Francisco Durán stating case numbers exceeded the county’s “highest risk” category.

The push for reopening occurs as the vaccination

effort in the state has broken down. The *Washington Post* reported Wednesday that “wait lists for vaccine appointments grow[s] by the thousands each day in some jurisdictions” in Maryland and Virginia.

The latter state “ranked among the worst performing states in getting doses out.” Even as Northam has demanded schools reopen in Virginia’s most populated areas, last week Fairfax County was forced to suspend shots for educators slated to return for in-person instruction.

According to a model from the University of Virginia Biocomplexity Institute cited in the *InsideNoVa* report, the state will most likely see tens of thousands of cases in the coming period, peaking at 98,000 cases this month. This peak would be three to four times the current caseload. The UVA report stated that “[c]old weather, time indoors, and pandemic fatigue, spurred by holiday travel and gatherings, increase the risk of transmission.”

According to the report, viral spread will increase by 15 percent if weather remains cold. This would mean “total COVID-19 cases in Virginia [would increase] to 700,000, or 10 percent of the state’s population” by midyear.

Governor Northam announced a toothless “modified stay-at-home order” in December, which would not impact rules for restaurants, stores or houses of worship. Instead, it would merely require residents to stay at home between midnight and 5:00 a.m.

Exceptions to the order include travel for medical treatment or buying food. Northam’s order limits the number of people in public or private gatherings to 10, down from 25. This limit does not apply to schools, houses of worship or employment settings. His

executive order also called for all Virginians ages five or older to wear a mask in all indoor settings with non-household members and outdoor settings that do not allow for physical distancing.

According to the *Washington Post*, the curfew is not being legally enforced but is rather an encouragement. This will limit its effectiveness as a public health measure. The governor acknowledged that the curfew is “messaging ... but it’s also about saving lives.”

Last May, Virginia began the process of reopening the state. At the time, the state had counted around 30,000 cases and 1,000 deaths from the virus. “Phase One” involved reopening restaurants, places of worship and other public places at 50 percent capacity. Before moving into Phase One, COVID-19 cases were still rising in the state. Before the reopening, the state failed to meet its daily goal of administering 10,000 tests to residents, undermining the state’s testing data.

A lengthy article in the *Post* paints a devastating portrait of the policy of reopening in early summer. “Cases were plummeting, especially among the more affluent. But beach communities became the centers of a new surge.” At the time, the *World Socialist Web Site* noted that Northam’s coronavirus task force was packed with representatives of big business, including advocates of opening the beaches over Memorial Day weekend.

Of his task force, Northam pompously declared, “These are Virginians who are thinking every day about how to protect the health of their staff and the communities in which they operate. They understand that our public health and business interests are aligned.” Nine months on, the policies of the state’s Democrats are written in blood.

The article continues, “[a]s mask-wearing became politicized, the virus took root in rural parts of Virginia and Maryland. College students brought it to their campuses and surrounding towns, and case rates among White residents grew to match those among Black residents.”

This did not stop the state government, which is dominated by the Democrats in both the state legislature and the governorship. Later in June, Governor Northam pushed the state into “Phase Two,” and outbreaks continued to emerge in the state. Phase Two involved the reopening of swimming pools, museums and outdoor concerts. Although the reopening

of in-person classes did not occur at this time, the state is now determined to return students to school and send workers back to work to continue to boost the profits of the ruling class.

The experience of COVID-19 in the Democratic Party-controlled Commonwealth of Virginia demonstrates that the only way to fight the pandemic is with the independent mobilization of teachers, students and workers to build rank-and-file safety committees in order to prepare for a general strike to close non-essential workplaces and schools with full compensation for workers and small businesses until the pandemic is brought to an end.



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