

California Governor Newsom halts COVID-19 tiered restriction system, plans full reopening in June as deaths hit 60,000

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There is a growing gulf between the anti-scientific policies of the ruling class and the grim reality of the current stage of the pandemic. The Democratic Party-run state of California was just months ago the epicenter of the winter COVID-19 surge where hospitals were pushed to the brink at zero percent capacity, however this past week Governor Gavin Newsom announced plans to fully reopen the state by June 15.

The plan will allow the full range of businesses, workplaces, schools and public areas to remain open with even fewer restrictions, adopting nothing other than “common sense” safety measures like mask-wearing. Throwing out its current color tier metrics for restrictions, the new “plan” hinges on two vague and entirely unspecified prerequisites: a “sufficient vaccine supply” and “low hospitalizations.” What the state deems acceptable has been left totally unspecified, giving Newsom maximum flexibility and ease to fully reopen the economy in a little over two months as more infections and deadlier variants of the virus are circulating widely.

By these intentionally vague standards, the delivery of vaccines would not be required, so long as there are doses being stored and available. The “low” number of acceptable hospitalizations and COVID-19 deaths is essentially arbitrary.

As most California counties lower their own restrictions, there are still more than 2,300 COVID-19 patients in hospitals and 534 COVID-19 patients in intensive care. To compare, an average of 2,300 COVID-positive patients were in the hospital in October, just before the deadly winter surge. However, it was during this period that Newsom ordered half-hearted lockdown measures, which kept all workplaces open and allowed open schools to remain so. Now, even those insufficient measures are to be dispensed with.

In his latest announcement, Governor Newsom aimed straight for the heart of the suffering population, and declared it was time to “begin planning for a life post-pandemic” and to look forward to a fully reopened economy, by “continuing the practices that got us here.” The practices of the ruling class have been completely negligent and arbitrary. Tiered reopenings, completely lackluster economic relief, dangerous working conditions throughout the whole pandemic and

continuous infections have led to more than 3.7 million infections and 60,082 preventable deaths in California alone.

The new June plan marks an end to California’s highly flexible color-coded tier system which has been used to classify counties as purple, red, orange, or yellow depending on their testing and hospitalization rates. The state briefly added an even more severe blue tier during the winter to indicate zero percent ICU capacities.

For the last six months, most of California’s 50 counties were placed in restrictive purple or red tiers, indicating widespread and severe positivity rates, and these counties were required to implement measures like reducing capacities at restaurants and other businesses, or discouraging large indoor and outdoor gatherings. In the last week, however, the majority of counties in California have been moved to the “orange” tier, allowing for double the previous capacity for outdoor events, indoor live events, places of worship, fitness centers, amusement parks and full capacities at retail stores, shopping centers, office workplaces and bars with outdoor accommodations.

Importantly, the new tier configuration perfectly coincides with the Democratic Party’s goal of returning children and teachers into classrooms before the pandemic has been put under control, in the sole interest of getting parents back to work full-time and making profits for the financial elite. President Joe Biden declared in February that K-8 schools must be reopened within his first 100 days in office, and California’s policymakers appear to be aiming to lead the pack of the back-to-school drive.

Newsom’s announcement also doubles as cover for businesses and universities to implement full, unsafe reopening plans. California’s universities have had fits and starts in attempting to reopen, only to become outbreak sites, throughout the pandemic. Universities have continuously risked the health of staff and students in unsafe housing and in-person classes in order to gain as much profit as possible during the pandemic. Eagerly awaiting their chance, numerous universities in the California State and University of California system declared, just days after the June reopening announcement, that they will proceed to the fall semester with limited to non-existent

restrictions for full service.

The tier system, from its inception, has had purposefully flexible criteria for shifting restrictions—criteria that only became more vague and impermanent as the pandemic progressed. As it currently stands, the system has worked primarily to create a false sense of safety. Nevertheless, this system has outlived its usefulness in California, as the ruling class moves to finish its return to school campaign and the Democrats' "return to normal."

The recent shift of most counties to the less restrictive tiers is clearly irresponsible. For example, San Diego County's COVID-19 case rates are nearly identical to the rates the county suffered six months ago before the devastating winter surge. San Diego County currently has a case rate of 8.2 cases per 100,000 people, a rate that is actually higher than October's average of 7.4, when San Diego and the rest of Southern California entered the red, and then purple tier in November, with a case rate of 8.9. Similarly, just a few months ago, Los Angeles County was the epicenter of the pandemic for the Western hemisphere, averaging more than 10,000 new cases per day throughout December and January. But this week the county has reopened indoor dining, movie theatres, and reduced capacity indoor concerts. Los Angeles County cites low case rates and vaccination supply, paying no mind to decreased testing rates and the unequal and still limited administration of the vaccines.

In the period from January to April, COVID-19 tests have gone down by more than 50 percent throughout the state of California. It is no coincidence that during this time the ruling class has rapidly accelerated reopening plans through their use of unscientific lies, misrepresentations and legislative force against working people. The platitudes and lies of the ruling class and policy makers would have the working class believe that the pandemic is nearing its conclusion, however, the surge in cases in the Midwest and globally shows that this is far from reality.

As Newsom, the Democratic Party and their allies force students and teachers back to face-to-face learning, MIS-C cases among children are rising dramatically. California leads the United States in the number of children documented with the condition, with more than 300 of America's more than 3,000 cases and 36 deaths.

As the devastation of the pandemic intensifies, the ruling class actually demands the acceleration and normalization of mass death and disease through their herd immunity policies and reopening plans, and complete disregard for rational policy and science.

Epidemiologists warn that the globe is actually already in the beginning of the fourth wave of the pandemic, and that reopenings will facilitate a worse surge than the winter. In a recent interview on "Meet the Press," Dr. Michael Osterholm, director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, and former COVID-19

policy adviser for Biden, referred to the extreme rise in cases in Michigan as a "wake up call" against other states' reopening plans. Osterholm explained that the spread of variants like B.1.1.7 has led to the recent steady rise of cases in the United States, even before full reopening causes an explosion of infections.

Osterholm elaborated: "We are the only country in the world right now experiencing this increasing number of cases due to this variant and at the same time, opening up, not closing down." He also warned of vaccine nationalism and vaccine-evading COVID-19 variants in his interview. A fraction of the world's population has seen a drop of the vaccine, predominantly in wealthier countries, leaving poor countries and billions of people without access.

Biden and the United States government have access to some of the best and most precise COVID-19 data and projections in the world, and yet, a class decision is made to ignore the dangers, reopen schools and workplaces with full knowledge that they will be condemning workers and their families to unnecessary suffering and death by doing so.

The Democratic Party stronghold of California has taken the lead in both the spread of COVID-19 and irrational pandemic policies. From the state's arbitrary and ineffective tier system to their superficial "equitable" vaccination pledges, to the drive to reopen schools, the state has led the nation by example for how to reopen the economy and shift blame for mass death and disease to the working class.

The Democrats hope to offer the appearance of improvement and political cover for their homicidal policies and profiteering. Meanwhile, the grim reality is that the pandemic is not ending. The same day that Newsom announced his June reopening plans, a new COVID-19 "double mutant" strain was discovered in California, illustrating the dangers that exist from allowing the virus to spread.



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