

White House leads charge by states to end masking

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In a campaign initiated by the Biden administration and coordinated by the White House, Democratic state governors are systematically dismantling all measures to save lives from the COVID-19 pandemic that has killed nearly 1 million Americans.

This campaign is unfolding amidst thousands of daily COVID deaths in the US: 3,234 Americans died Thursday, the fourth consecutive day in which more than 3,000 people died. At the present rate, the official death toll from the pandemic over the past two years will exceed 1 million within 30 days.

Nevada Governor Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, announced Thursday that the state would immediately end its mask mandate. This is the latest in a series of states ending mask and vaccine mandates and eliminating contact tracing, disease surveillance and reporting systems.

Nevada joined California, New York, Delaware, Illinois, Oregon and Rhode Island in dropping mask mandates. As the WSWs reported late last month, over a dozen states have ended or reduced contact tracing, including Michigan, New York, Ohio, Virginia, New Hampshire, Indiana and others.

The starting point for this campaign was the declaration on January 21 by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director Rochelle Walensky advocating ending masking and isolation.

She stated, “If cases are high, severity will be such that we’re in an OK spot in our hospitals... our masks might be more likely to come off. And then if you get a case of a runny nose, you might say, ‘Okay, well, I’m going to stay home, because that’s what I do when I have a runny nose.’ But you don’t necessarily have to isolate.”

Walensky’s interview was in keeping with a White House campaign to embrace mass infection dubbed the

“new normal,” which was launched on January 6 by a series of articles co-authored by Ezekiel Emanuel in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA).

In line with his leading role in the White House’s efforts to abandon measures to stop the spread of COVID-19, Emanuel is at the center of the present campaign by state governors to end mask mandates.

Politico writes,

The centrist New Democrats Coalition hosted former Biden adviser Zeke Emanuel—brother of another former House Democratic campaign chief, Rahm Emanuel—at a meeting on the topic last week.

Rep. Ami Bera (D-Calif.), a member of that group and a physician, has penned a soon-to-be-published op-ed for his local paper, arguing that it’s time to declare the end of the “pandemic” phase of the virus.

As part of this shift, the Democrats, many of whom pledged along with Biden to “follow the science,” have adopted the anti-mask rhetoric of the fascist movement led by former President Donald Trump.

“By the time we’re at the midterms, we’ll hopefully not be wearing masks,” said Rep. Josh Gottheimer. “We all want to get back to life,” he added.

Supporting the fascists’ demand to end mask mandates in schools, Michigan Representative Elissa Slotkin said, “We’re never going to get risk down to zero. But there’s also risk by not letting our kids have normal lives.”

Democratic Representative Susan Wild added, absurdly, “Millions of people haven’t been affected at

all by Omicron... We have to recognize that. We can't live in this state in perpetuity."

As a part of this campaign, the Biden administration is seeking to present its abandonment of masking and isolation as a response to a campaign by the states. Asked over and over again whether he supported the moves by states to end mask mandates, Biden said it was a "tough call."

The White House is playing coy in its public statements, even as administration staff like White House Coronavirus Response Coordinator Jeff Zients and advisers such as Emanuel coordinate the ending of COVID-19 restrictions behind the scenes.

Politico frames this shift as a response to public sentiment, which it asserts supports mass infection policies. White House surrogate Ashish Jha claimed, "Governors across the nation are lifting mask mandates... our leaders reflect where folks are."

This is a deliberate lie, which seeks to present an effort to infect the population with a deadly disease as a response to popular demands. Poll after poll shows continued strong support for saving lives, despite the propaganda barrage by the media and politicians. One poll by Navigator Research found that three-quarters of the public supports mask mandates in some circumstances, and two-thirds support mask mandates in all contexts.

The most recent YouGov poll showed that the American public, by a very substantial margin, favors "protecting Americans from the health effects of the coronavirus outbreak" over protecting "the economy."

Working people are, in fact, tired of perpetual mass death and the disruption of their lives caused by the constant threat of infection by an omnipresent and deadly disease. But the Biden administration is seeking, through a massive propaganda campaign, to turn this frustration into acceptance of mass death by falsely declaring the pandemic will end if the public simply ignores it.

A critical element of this campaign is the systematic effort to bury coverage of ongoing mass death. "The best political strategy is not to have it dominate the news every day," *Politico* wrote. True to form, the US print and broadcast media have stopped reporting the daily death toll, while seeking to slash the reporting of COVID-19 cases and deaths.

On February 2, the US Department of Health and

Human Services stopped reporting the daily number of hospital deaths from COVID-19. On Monday, *Politico* reported that the Biden administration would seek to recalculate the number of people hospitalized with COVID-19. States are, one after another, reducing the frequency with which they report COVID-19 deaths.

In the spring and summer of 2021, the abandonment of measures to stop the spread of COVID-19 led to a major resurgence of the pandemic, driven by the emergence of new variants. Likewise, the current abandonment of all mitigation measures will leave the population disarmed in the face of yet another invariable surge of the pandemic.

Since the emergence of COVID-19 in early 2020, the single-minded preoccupation of both the Democrats and Republicans has been to ensure the continual enrichment of the financial oligarchy, no matter the cost in human lives. The only way to stop the ongoing and perpetual mass death is the building of a movement in the working class, armed with the perspective of eliminating and eradicating COVID-19.



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