

# Blue states move to drop mask mandates

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America's blue states are increasingly chasing normalcy, especially when it comes to face mask rules meant to slow the spread of COVID-19.

**The latest:** Nevada, a swing state with a Democratic governor, joined New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, Delaware, California and other states that have recently announced an end date for mask requirements and other COVID restrictions.

## Recent announcements made include:

**Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak** (D) rescinded the state's mask mandate in public places, including schools, on Thursday because of a "rapid" decline in

coronavirus cases and falling hospitalizations.

- "We are at this point now because as Nevadans we always look out for one another - that's our Battle Born spirit and that's the Nevada way," Sisolak said.

**New York Gov. Kathy Hochul** (D) [said Wednesday](#) the state will drop its indoor mask mandate and a requirement that businesses ask customers for proof of vaccination starting Thursday.

- "At this time, we say it is the right decision to lift this mandate for indoor business, and let counties, cities and businesses to make their own decisions on what they want to do with respect to masks or the vaccination requirement," Hochul said, [citing decline cases and hospitalizations](#).

**Illinois Gov. J.B. Pritzker** (D) said Wednesday that he hopes to lift the mask mandate for indoor settings, with some exceptions, by the end of the month.

- The plan, which Pritzker is set to unveil later Wednesday, will [reportedly](#) not include an end to the indoor mask mandate in schools.

**Rhode Island Gov. Dan McKee** (D) also [announced](#) Wednesday that the statewide mask mandate and vaccine proof policy for businesses and venues would end on Feb. 11. He plans to lift the statewide school indoor mask requirement on March 4.

- "Thank you, Rhode Island for coming together during the winter surge by getting vaccinated, getting boosted, and wearing your mask indoors," McKee said.

**Massachusetts' department of education**, meanwhile, said Wednesday it will lift its school mask mandate on Feb. 28.

- "With Massachusetts a national leader in vaccinating kids, combined with our robust testing programs, it is time to lift the mask mandate in schools and give students and staff a sense of normalcy after dealing with enormous challenges over the past two years," Governor Charlie Baker (R) [said in a statement](#).

**New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy (D)** announced earlier this week that his state is unwinding school mask mandates that have been in place for the entire pandemic.

- "We are not going to manage COVID to zero," [tweeted](#) Gov. Phil Murphy. "We have to learn how to live with COVID as we move from a pandemic to an endemic phase of this virus."
- **What we're hearing:** Murphy knows he has to sell this plan to a lot of nervous parents. We're told he plans to watch the data from schools every day and is banking on his past willingness to react to data. But his top goal is to restore a sense of normalcy.

**California health officials** said Monday that the state [will lift its indoor mask mandate](#) after Feb. 15.

- "Since California's peak during the Omicron surge, the state has experienced a 65% decrease in case rates," the California Department of Public Health said in a statement.

**Delaware Gov. John Carney (D)** also [announced](#) Monday that the state will lift its mask mandate for indoor settings on Feb. 11, while masking requirements for K-12 schools and childcare facilities will end on March 31.

- "We're in a much better place than we were several weeks ago in the middle of the Omicron surge of COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations," Carney said.

**Connecticut Gov. Ned Lamont (D)** announced during a [news briefing](#) Monday afternoon that the state's mask mandate for schools and childcare centers will end Feb. 28.

- "The biggest difference I can tell you is the fact that we now have the tools to keep ourselves safe," Lamont said.
- Both governors noted that school districts and local communities will be able to consider local mask mandates.

*Editor's note: This story was originally published on Feb. 7. It has been updated with additional state announcements.*