

Florida Gov. DeSantis suspends all remaining Covid restrictions: 'We are no longer in a state of emergency'

PUBLISHED MON, MAY 3 2021•12:56 PM EDT UPDATED MON, MAY 3 2021•2:51 PM EDT



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KEY POINTS

- Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis signed an executive order on Monday that immediately suspends the state's remaining Covid-19 public health restrictions.
 - "I think that's the evidence-based thing to do," DeSantis said at a Monday news conference.
 - Private businesses can still require masks and enforce social distancing and other protective measures.
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WASHINGTON — Florida Governor Ron DeSantis on Monday suspended an executive order that immediately ended all public health emergency orders and related public health restrictions.

“The fact is, we are no longer in a state of emergency,” DeSantis said during a news conference. He acknowledged that Florida was still not done with its fight against the coronavirus but reiterated the nation’s decline in Covid-19 cases and deaths.

“I think that’s the evidence-based thing to do,” DeSantis said, adding that asking vaccinated individuals to continue to wear masks would undermine confidence in the coronavirus vaccines.

Private businesses can still require masks and enforce social distancing and other protective measures.

DeSantis signed a bill Monday that codifies the executive order into law, effective July 1. The executive order, he said, was designed to “bridge the gap” until then. The measure, which effectively ends all local pandemic-related restrictions, also bans vaccine passports.

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Florida has reported the third-most Covid-19 cases in the U.S. at more than 2.2 million since the beginning of the pandemic and the fourth-highest death toll at more than 35,000 fatalities, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Average new cases there, however, have fallen by more than 13% over the last week, dropping to 4,885 as of Sunday, according to the data.

The White House did not immediately respond to CNBC's request for comment.

Last week, the Biden administration announced a relaxation of federal public health guidance on wearing masks outdoors.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends that fully vaccinated people can exercise and attend small gatherings outside without wearing a face mask. The agency still recommends that fully vaccinated people wear a mask outdoors when in crowded areas.