

The Virgin Islands Consortium

Several Democrat-Led States Doing Away With Indoor Mask Mandates in 'Huge Step Back to Normalcy'

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A number of Democrat-led states said Monday they would eliminate the Covid-induced restriction requiring people to wear masks indoors, including at public schools, as the Omicron surge of the virus and hospitalizations associated with it continue to subside.

Governors of New Jersey and Connecticut said Monday that school districts would be able to set their own mask policy beginning March 7 and Feb. 28, respectively.

In California, Governor Gavin Newsom said the indoor mask mandate will expire on Feb. 15 as Covid cases have declined statewide by 65 percent from its Omicron high. Mr. Newsom said the mandate will remain in place for schools.

New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy said the decision to lift the mask mandate represented a major step toward normalcy for children. "This is a huge step back to normalcy for our kids," he said. According to the Wall Street Journal, citing state officials, school districts in New Jersey will be able to keep mask mandates in place if they choose and students or staff who want to wear face coverings will be allowed.

In the U.S. Virgin Islands cases led by the Omicron surge are down 93 percent. The percentage is determined using the highest number of infections reached at the peak of the surge, [which was 3,872 on Jan. 8](#), and the current number of active cases which stood at 267 as of Monday.

So far, the [only changes](#) Governor Albert Bryan has announced in response to the drastic decrease in Omicron-led cases was the removal of proof of a negative Covid-19 test for vaccinated Virgin Islanders traveling home, and moving from 72 hours to five days the length of time a negative Covid-test will be valid for anyone traveling to the USVI who is either unvaccinated, or was not vaccinated in the territory.

The governor, however, [told the Consortium](#) the restrictions would be eased and would revert to levels established prior to the Omicron surge this week.