



Biden Extends US National Emergency Over COVID-19

Description

USA: President [Joe Biden](#) said the U.S. national emergency that was declared in early 2020 due to [COVID-19](#) will be extended beyond March 1, citing what he called a “risk to the public health and safety.”

In a [letter released](#) on the White House website, Biden told House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) that “there remains a need to continue this national emergency.”

“The COVID-19 pandemic continues to cause significant risk to the public health and safety of the Nation. More than 900,000 people in this Nation have perished from the disease, and it is essential to continue to combat and respond to COVID-19 with the full capacity and capability of the Federal Government,” he wrote, adding that his office has “determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared” almost two years ago.

As of late last year, data from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Johns Hopkins University showed that there were 60,000 more COVID-19 deaths under the Biden administration than under the Trump administration.

President Donald Trump had declared a national emergency, which allowed the freeing up of about \$50 billion in federal aid.

The emergency would have been automatically terminated unless, within 90 days prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the president sent a notice to Congress stating it would continue beyond the anniversary date.

“For this reason, the national emergency declared on March 13, 2020, and beginning March 1, 2020, must continue in effect beyond March 1, 2022,” Biden [wrote](#) in another statement, adding that the notice will be published in the Federal Register.

His decision to extend the emergency comes as several Democratic governors moved to rescind COVID-19 mandates, including mask rules, in recent days. The governors of New York and Massachusetts announced last week that they would end certain mask mandates in their states, following similar moves by New Jersey, California, Connecticut, Delaware, and Oregon.

Meanwhile, federal health officials last week indicated during a White House briefing that they were preparing for the next phase of the pandemic, as Omicron cases have dropped.

One of those officials, White House COVID-19 adviser Anthony Fauci, told MNSBC on Feb. 15 that he doesn't believe political sentiment is the reason mandates are being dropped nationwide.

Some critics have said, however, that Democratic leaders are turning away from COVID-19 rules because they fear losing control in either the House or Senate in the 2022 midterms.

A Jan. 31 Monmouth University Poll showed that about 70 percent of Americans agree with the statement, "It's time we accept that COVID is here to stay and we just need to get on with our lives."

By Jack Phillips

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