

Governor Lamont Executive Order expiration

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Everybody wants the pandemic to be over. But want and reality don't always align. We must renew the Governor's executive orders and maintain the mask mandate in schools, at least until we get through winter, the vaccine rates for our children are higher, our youngest children can get vaccinated and the infection rates are low enough that there is little to no community spread.

I can see no logical or ethical justification for allowing the mask mandate to expire before those aforementioned conditions are met. We are still in the throes of this pandemic, unfortunately and we know that masks protect our children and all they come in contact with – our teachers, families, some of whom are too young to get vaccinated or immunocompromised and at greater risk for severe Covid outcomes.

A [recent, large study](#), affirmed by accredited medical institutions and news sites, confirms that masks help reduce the spread of Covid-19. We've seen the numbers in the study play out in real life in places where masking in schools and other facets of civic life were not required in the U.S. The rates of infection, hospitalization and death were much higher in those localities, including children being hospitalized.

Those who lay claim to false notions of "freedom" as a galvanizing buzzword and excuse to allow the mask mandate to lapse are creating dangerous false equivalencies. We impose many rules on and remove many so-called "freedoms" from our children in schools – dress codes, no texting in class, no weapons, MMR vaccines, and so many more – with all good reasons; to keep our kids safe and in an environment where learning can take place. Learning can take place with masks on – that we've seen over the past two years. Learning cannot take place if kids are sick and teachers are hospitalized and bus drivers are dying of Covid. We've seen those things happen too.

A piece of cloth on one's face is a small price to pay to keep our schools and businesses open, and keep one another safe. We are all adults. We can handle it. What I can't handle is the thought of a child on a ventilator or their grandmother on a ventilator, or a teacher or janitor or administrator. These tragedies have been largely avoidable. We have an opportunity to remember that here and do the right thing.