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## ***COVID-19 cases in United States hit new six-month record***

New coronavirus infection totals hit a new six-month high in the United States on Friday, with more than 130,000 cases reported, according to the Worldometer site, which compiles a running total worldwide.

The rise in the United States was greater than for the next three countries combined—India, Indonesia and Brazil—although their combined population is six times that of the US, and far more of the American population have been vaccinated.

Such a comparison underscores the criminal role of the American ruling class and both its political parties, the Democrats as much as the Republicans, in sabotaging the only effective public health response to a pandemic of such lethality as COVID-19: a full-scale lockdown, with mass testing and contact tracing, combined with mass vaccination, until the virus is exterminated.

While the Biden administration claims to be fighting COVID-19, it is spreading the illusion that the pandemic is virtually over, and that vaccines by themselves will be sufficient, while all public health measures can be relaxed.

Most dangerously, the administration is demanding that all public schools be reopened, beginning this month, with full in-person instruction. Given that there is no vaccine for children under 12 and that the Delta variant, which now dominates, is highly transmissible, this is a recipe for mass infection and death.

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Already, children's hospitals across the Southern US, the current epicenter of the pandemic, are filled to capacity. Infections have been reported among infants who cannot yet walk and deaths of children barely old enough to go to school.

Only half the US population is fully vaccinated, leaving tens of millions of adults extremely vulnerable to the pandemic, as well as nearly all children. The great danger is that this huge pool of vulnerable people provides ample raw material for the virus to develop new variants, one of which may prove to be more resistant to the vaccines.

All 50 states were classified as having either high or substantial community transmission, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. But instead of emergency measures to break the chain of transmission, state and municipal governments, Democrat and Republican alike, are approving mass summertime assemblies of people, largely unmasked and frequently unvaccinated, which will inevitably fuel the contagion.



Fans gather and cheer on day one of the Lollapalooza music festival at Grant Park in Chicago, July 29, 2021 [Credit: AP Photo/Shafkat Anowar File]

At the Lollapalooza festival last week in Chicago, more than 385,000 people were packed for a four-day event of music headliners. While Mayor Lori Lightfoot responded about the financial boon to her city with, “I feel very good about what we’ve done,” Dr. Tina Tan, a professor of medicine at Northwestern University in Chicago, warned that the festival was “a recipe for disaster,” expected to ignite another wave of infections throughout the city.

Summerfest, an annual music festival staged in downtown Milwaukee since 1968, will hold packed events in September and will not require masks, proof of vaccination or a negative COVID test for admission. But already, at least 500 people who joined in the mass celebration of the Milwaukee Bucks championship in the National Basketball Association last month have contracted COVID-19, according to health officials.

Milwaukee Health Commissioner Kirsten Johnson said during a press briefing, “We encourage anyone who has attended a large gathering, such as the watch party in the Deer District, get tested for COVID-19 due to the increased risk of transmission.” This would mean well over 100,000 people. COVID cases in Milwaukee have risen 155 percent in one week.

On Friday, Sioux Falls, South Dakota began hosting the 81st iteration of the Sturgis Motorcycle Rally, which spawned a massive superspreader event in the Dakotas and the Northwest last year when more than 450,000 people attended, leading to a chain of events that infected a quarter million people across the country. This year, more than 700,000 are expected to descend on South Dakota, more than the entire adult population of the state.

South Dakota Republican Governor Kristi Noem has been one of the foremost opponents of any public health response to the pandemic and is preparing a campaign for the Republican presidential nomination as an advocate of “freedom,” presumably the freedom to spread disease and death. Her real interest is the freedom to make money, as the Sturgis event is expected to generate more than \$800 million in sales for state businesses.

Equally criminal is the conduct of Florida Governor Ron DeSantis, who has ordered local school districts not to require students to wear masks, threatening to cut off their state funding if they do so. This decree was issued even as the Delta variant is running wild throughout the state, and major hospitals have begun suspending elective surgeries, extending their COVID units into conference rooms, auditoriums and cafeterias.

Dr. Marc Napp, chief medical officer for Memorial Healthcare System in Hollywood, Florida, told the Associated Press, “We are seeing a surge like we’ve not seen before in terms of the patients coming in. It’s the sheer number coming in at the same time. There are only so many beds, so many doctors, only so many nurses.” The number of

hospitalized patients in the US has increased four-fold to nearly 45,000 in the span of a month.

Many of the state's larger school districts have filed suit against DeSantis seeking a court order to overturn the ban on mask mandates.

In a heart-rending case, parents of disabled children have filed suit against the governor, charging that his ban violates the Americans with Disabilities Act, because it forces their children to return to school unmasked, when this is a huge risk to their health. "Parents are put into an impossible situation of having to choose between the health and life of their child and returning to school," the lawsuit states.

Many of these children, because of their disabilities, require hands-on instruction and cannot learn in a virtual setting. Also because of their disabilities, they are more vulnerable to getting infected and to the worst consequences of COVID-19.

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