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Texas Ended Lockdowns and Mask Mandates. Now Locked-Down States Are Where Covid Is Growing Most



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04/21/2021 • [Ryan McMaken \(https://mises.org/profile/ryan-mcmaken\)](https://mises.org/profile/ryan-mcmaken)

Early last month, Texas governor Greg Abbott announced he would end the state’s mask mandate and allow most businesses to function at 100 percent capacity.

The response from the corporate media and the Left was predictable. California governor Gavin Newsom declared

40 COMMENTS (/WIRE/TEXAS-ENDED-LOCKDOWNS-AND-MASK-MANDATES-NOW-LOCKED-DOWN-STATES-ARE-WHERE-COVID-GROWING-MOST#DISQUS_THREAD)

LEE ESTO EN ESPAÑOL (</ES/WIRE/TEXAS-FINALIZO-LOS-CONFINAMIENTOS-Y-LOS-MANDATOS-DE-MASCARA-AHORA-LOS-ESTADOS-CONFINADOS-SON>)

(<https://www.politico.com/states/california/story/2021/03/02/newsom-calls-texas-absolutely-reckless-for-lifting-covid-rules-1366449>) the move “absolutely reckless.” Beto O’Rourke called the GOP (<https://www.mrctv.org/blog/beto-orourke-lambasts-gop-cult-death-withdrawing-mask-mandates-texas>) a “cult of death.” Joe Biden called the move “Neanderthal thinking.” Keith Olbermann insisted, “Texas has decided to join the side of the virus” and suggested (<https://saraacarter.com/keith-olbermann-why-are-we-wasting-vaccinations-on-texas-if-texas-has-decided-to-join-the-side-of-the-virus/>) Texans shouldn’t be allowed to take the covid vaccine. *Vanity Fair* ran an article with the title

“Republican Governors Celebrate COVID Anniversary with Bold Plan to Kill Another 500,000 Americans (<https://www.vanityfair.com/news/2021/03/greg-abbott-texas-covid-restrictions>)”

Other states have followed in Texas’s wake, and Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, and Georgia are now all states where covid restrictions range from weak to nonexistent.

Georgia and Florida, of course, are both notable for ending lockdowns and restriction much earlier than many other states. And in those cases as well, the state governments were criticized for their policies, which were said to be reckless and sure to lead to unprecedented death. Georgia’s policy was denounced as an experiment in “human sacrifice.”

Yet in recent weeks, these predictions about Texas’s fate have proven to be spectacularly wrong. Moreover, many of the states with the worst growth in covid cases—and the worst track records in overall death counts—have been states that have had some of the harshest lockdowns. The failure of the lockdown narrative in this case has been so overwhelming that last week, when asked about the Texas situation, Anthony Fauci could only suggest a few unconvincing lines about how maybe Texans are voluntarily wearing masks and locking down more strenuously than people in other states. In Fauci’s weak-sauce explanation we see a narrative that simply fails to explain the actual facts of the matter.

Texas vs. Michigan

The Texas situation is just one piece of a state-by-state picture that is devastating for the lockdowns-save-lives narrative.

For example, let’s look at covid case numbers as of April 20.

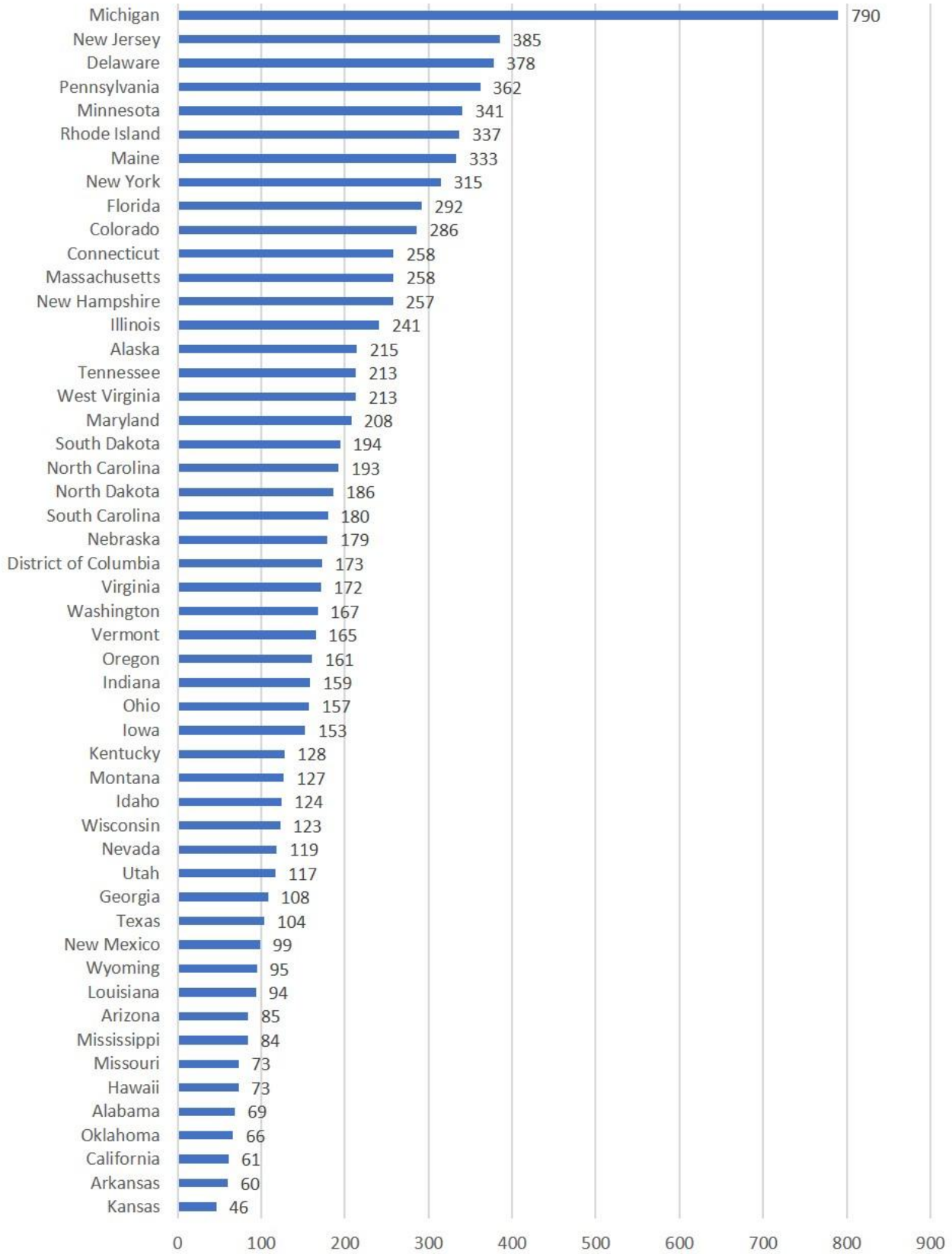
Case numbers are a favorite metric for advocates of stay-at-home orders, business closures, mask mandates, and repressive measures in the name of disease control.

In Texas, the total new cases (seven-day moving average (<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/>)) on April 20 was 3,004. That comes out to approximately 103 per million.

Now, let’s look at Michigan, where a variety of strict mask mandates and partial lockdowns continue. Restaurant capacity remains at 50 percent, and the state continues to issue edicts about how many people one is allowed to have over for dinner.

In Michigan, the seven-day moving average for new infections as of April 20 was 790 per million—nearly eight times worse than Texas.

Covid cases per million , (7-day moving average, as of April 20)



(<https://cdn.mises.org/covid1.jpg>)

By the logic of lockdown advocates, states with harsh lockdowns should have far fewer cases and less growth in cases.

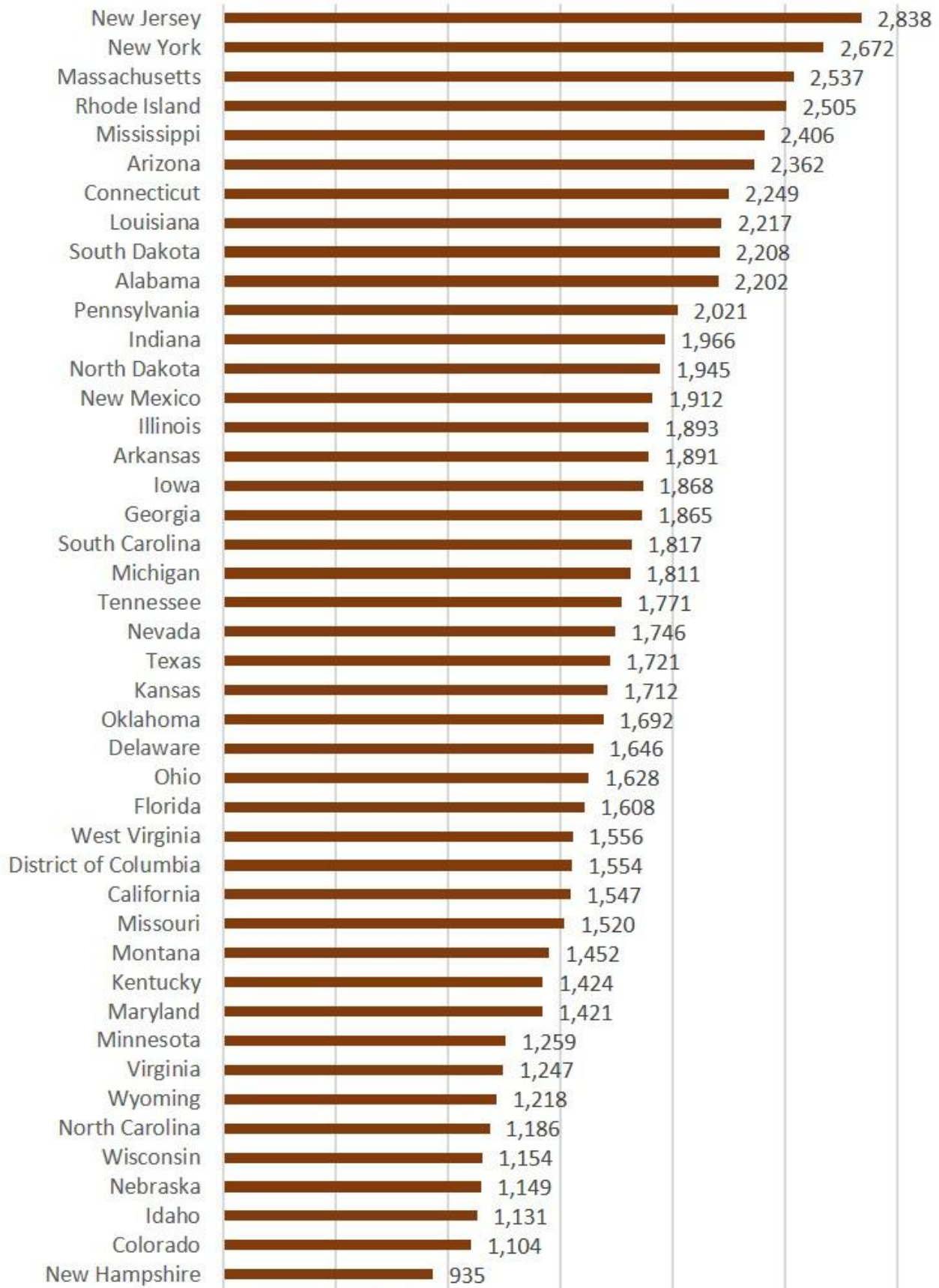
This, however, is most certainly not the case. In New Jersey, for example, where lockdowns have been long and harsh, case growth is nearly four times what it is in Texas. And then there are Pennsylvania, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Maine, and New York, all of which have new case growth rates of more than double what's going on Texas.

Indeed, the only state with notably lax covid policies that's in the top ten of case growth is Florida, which nonetheless is experiencing growth rates that are slower than in states run by lockdown fetishists like Andrew Cuomo and Phil Murphy.

Moreover, Florida's covid-19 overall outbreak has been far less deadly than those in the states that embraced lockdowns long and hard. New Jersey, for example, has the worst covid death rate in the nation at 2,838 per million as of April 20. Right behind are New York and Massachusetts with total deaths per million at 2,672 and 2,537, respectively.

Florida, on the other hand, is twenty-eighth in the nation in terms of covid deaths, at 1,608. Texas has total deaths per million at 1,721.

Total reported covid deaths per million, as of April 20





(<https://cdn.mises.org/covid2.jpg>)

In other words, Florida isn't likely to catch up to New York or New Jersey any time soon, and it's certainly not going to soon catch up with Michigan, which is leaving other states in the dust in terms of case growth. For those who are scared to death of covid, they'd be better off in Florida or Texas or Georgia than in the states that have long embraced lockdowns and claim to be "following the science."

So how can this be explained?

The lockdown advocates don't seem to have an explanation at all.

Last week, Anthony Fauci, head of the US National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) struggled to come up with an explanation as he testified to Congress.

In previous weeks, Fauci tended to rely on the old tried-and-true claim that if we only wait two to four more weeks, cases will explode wherever covid restrictions are lessened or eliminated. Lockdown advocates tried this for months after Georgia ended its stay-at-home order, although Georgia consistently performed better than many states that continued their lockdowns.

But now that we're six weeks out from the end of Texas's mask mandate and partial lockdowns, Fauci could offer no plausible explanation. Rather, when pressed on the matter by Representative Jim Jordan, Fauci insisted (<https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2021/04/16/fauci-suggests-locked-down-states-are-doing-worse-than-texas-because-people-are-ignoring-lockdown-orders/>) that what really matters is compliance rather than the existence of mask mandates and lockdown mandates:

There's a difference between lockdown and the people obeying the lockdown.... You know you could have a situation where they say, "We're going to lock down," and yet you have people doing exactly what they want—

Jordan asked if this explains the situation in Michigan and New Jersey (and other states with quickly growing covid case rates). Fauci then claimed he couldn't hear the question

(<https://www.breitbart.com/politics/2021/04/16/fauci-suggests-locked-down-states-are-doing-worse->

than-texas-because-people-are-ignoring-lockdown-orders/), and Jordan was cut off by the committee chairman.

No one who is familiar with the situation in states like Texas, Florida, and Georgia, however, would find it plausible that the spread of covid has been lessened in those areas by more militant use of masks and social distancing. Fauci's testimony was clearly just a case of a government "expert" grasping about for an explanation.

But don't expect Fauci and his supporters to give up on insisting that New York and Michigan are doing "the right thing" while Texas and Florida are embracing "human sacrifice" as a part of a "death cult."

The actual numbers paint a very different picture, and even casual observers can now see that the old narrative was very, very wrong.

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Ryan McMaken (<https://mises.org/profile/ryan-mcmaken>) ([@ryanmcmaken](https://twitter.com/ryanmcmaken) (<https://twitter.com/ryanmcmaken>)) is a senior editor at the Mises Institute. Send him your article submissions for the *Mises Wire* and *Power&Market*, but read article guidelines (<https://mises.org/blog/article-submission-guidelines-mises-daily>) first. Ryan has degrees in economics and political science from the University of Colorado and was a housing economist for the State of Colorado. He is the author of *Commie Cowboys: The Bourgeoisie and the Nation-State in the Western Genre* (<http://store.mises.org/Commie-Cowboys-The-Bourgeoisie-and-the-Nation-State-in-the-Western-Genre-Digital-Book-P10923.aspx>).



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Ryan McMaken (/profile/ryan-mcmaken)

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