

Delta variant causes California business owners in liberal cities to fear new COVID restrictions

Renewed COVID restrictions have led to angst for small business owners in California.

The Biden administration announced a goal of July 4th as “a return to normal,” but small business owners in liberal cities such as San Francisco and Los Angeles are now fearing that it may in fact be a return to 2020.

The reason: public health leaders in Democratic-run counties reinstating mask mandates around the country.

The news comes as the delta variant of COVID-19 spreads throughout the U.S., with the heightened fears sending shockwaves across the stock market Monday and Apple reportedly delaying a return to its offices.

It also comes in the wake of the FOX Business report that Wall Street executives are closely monitoring the variant and whether a change of course is necessary with a return to offices looming.

Despite this, experts say the risk for those vaccinated is incredibly low, with an estimated 97% of those currently hospitalized from COVID unvaccinated, and fatalities from breakthrough infections remaining rare.

WALL STREET EYES COVID-19 DELTA AS RETURN TO OFFICE LOOMS

The overwhelming statistics supporting the vaccines’ efficacy coupled with the recent decisions to reinstate or recommend mask mandates from politicians have confused business owners.

“As soon as I heard that mask mandates were coming back, immediately I was concerned that [it] would delay our ability to reopen our restaurants,” said Steven Sarver, owner of fast-casual chain Ladle & Leaf in San Francisco to FOX Business’ Lydia Hu.

“People and business leaders use it as a reason to be concerned. It’s a signal to everyone that we need to slow down again – we can’t really return to normal. Business leaders and workers aren’t going to want to return to work if they have to wear a mask. It just doesn’t make sense,” the California businessman continued.

Other Bay Area business owners concede masks – while not desirable – are better than the alternative: shutting down.

“In general, nobody likes wearing masks – I don’t know anyone that cheers having to wear one – but if the choice is another 15 months of shutdown or wearing a mask inside, then I will be happy to wear a mask,” said Cache Bouren, owner of Haberdasher in San Jose.

“Facing the idea of another six to eight months without any real revenue coming [is] a very scary thing,” admitted Bouren, who is set to open up a new bar called Cash Only soon.

NY BUSINESS OWNER SAYS WORKER SHORTAGE ‘AN EMERGENCY’ SINCE COVID PANDEMIC HIT

However, some experts are skeptical of the need for masks, especially as vaccination numbers continue to increase and the vaccines show effectiveness against the delta variant.

“Did the science suddenly change? No, the politics did. This is about politics, not science. Stop the madness,” said Dr. Jeff Barke to FOX Business when asked about the reinstatement of mask mandates in his home of Los Angeles County.

Barke said Monday in an interview with KUSI San Diego that the mandate “makes no sense scientifically or medically. It only makes sense if you look through the lens of a tyrannical ruler trying to rule through fear.” The interview was later removed from YouTube for “spreading misinformation.”

When asked by FOX Business how he felt about Los Angeles politicians’ role in the new mandate, he pointed to a quote from one of the nation’s Founding Fathers.

“As Thomas Jefferson said, ‘there is no justification for taking away individuals’ freedom in the guise of public safety,’ This is as true now as it was 245 years

ago,” the California physician warned.

While Los Angeles County continues to outpace the national average in vaccinations, public health officials still decided to plow ahead with the mask mandate, going against recent public statements from top White House science adviser Dr. Anthony Fauci and CDC Director Rochelle Walensky.

“If you are vaccinated, you have a high degree of protection. So you need not wear a mask, either indoor or outdoor,” Fauci said.

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Restaurant owners in Los Angeles believe the messaging is not consistent enough when it comes to vaccines and masks.

“It’s creating anger. It’s creating confusion. And, you know, the funny thing is, is it creates more vaccine hesitancy, in my opinion,” said Angela Marsden, owner of the Pineapple Hill Saloon & Grill in Sherman Oaks, California, to Fox.

“I don’t understand the inconsistency, the confusion and the fear baiting that is basically being used by our leadership... I want them to quit interfering with our businesses and let us make our own decisions,” she said.

Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said last week that his department will not be enforcing a mandatory indoor mask requirement as it “is not backed by science and contradicts the U.S. CDC guidelines.”

Source:

<https://www.foxbusiness.com/economy/delta-variant-causes-businesses-in-liberal-cities-to-fear-new-covid-restrictions>

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