



National Federation of Independent Business
Randi Thompson, Nevada State Director
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February 9, 2022

Governor Steve Sisolak
101 N. Carson Street
Carson City, NV 89701

Dear Governor:

On behalf of the over 200,000 small businesses in Nevada that are struggling to survive and stay open, I'm writing to ask you to please revoke the mask mandates on employers.

Nevada had the highest "quit" rate in the nation last year at 3.8%, according to an analysis by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. Some of the reasons workers cite for quitting is having to wear a mask at work for hours, having to continually ask customers to put on a mask, and getting harassed by customers who refuse to put on a mask. This mandate is cruel to employees and making work a miserable experience.

Just about every business in Nevada has a "help wanted" sign on their door. We continue to have the highest unemployment rate in the nation, and the mask mandate contributes to that. Employers tell me that when they interview potential employees, they ask: "Will I have wear a mask? If so, then I won't take the job."

Despite the bad employment numbers, the COVID case numbers are improving. We have seen steady declines in cases this past month. In fact, there was a 49% decline in COVID cases across the state this past week. Hospitals are reporting they have capacity and most COVID patients are being treated on an outpatient basis.

Only nine states currently have an indoor mask mandate, and numerous states are removing the mandates. New Jersey is dropping the school mask mandate in March. California will end its statewide indoor mask mandate for vaccinated individuals next week and New York's indoor mask-or-vaccine mandate governing businesses is expected to expire on Thursday. The CDC has said fully vaccinated people can safely forgo face-covering in most public settings.

As a small business owner, I can attest to the challenge that masks present. Our customers can't see the smile on our employee's faces. Masks make communication difficult. The customer's experience is severely impacted in a negative way, which is hurting businesses on so many levels. It's not fun to eat out, go shopping, or enjoy live entertainment if you have to continually wear a mask.

While many question the effectiveness of masks in stopping the spread of COVID, there is agreement that after two years more and more people are refusing to wear masks, which is presenting a challenge to employees who still have to act like the “mask police.” While some may choose to wear them, it should be up to us as individuals to make that choice based on our own health concerns.

There are a variety of reasons while it’s time to end the mask mandate, especially for small businesses, and I beg that you look at how this single move will do so much to bring our vital employees back to work.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Randi Thompson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Randi Thompson
State Director
National Federation of Independent Business

CC: Michael Brown
Terry Reynolds
Yvanna Cancela