

State of Vermont

Senate Chamber



Montpelier, Vermont

Senate Resolution

Special Session

By Senators Balint, Baruth, Bray, Campion, Clarkson, Hardy, Hinsdale, Hooker, Lyons, MacDonald, McCormack, Pearson, Perchlik and Pollina,

S.R. 4. Senate resolution urging Governor Philip Scott to use all possible public health measures to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases and associated deaths and maximize vaccination rates among all eligible population groups.

Whereas, within days of the first detected COVID-19 cases in Vermont, Governor Scott issued Executive Order No. 01-20, “Declaration of State of Emergency in Response to COVID-19 and National Guard Call-Out,” initiating a series of actions across Vermont to reduce the spread of the disease, and

Whereas, since the start of the pandemic, Governor Scott has continuously stressed that Vermont’s response to COVID-19 is based on data and science, and

Whereas, on July 24, 2020, Governor Scott issued Addendum 2 to Amended and Restated Executive Order No. 01-20, mandating that face masks be worn in all indoor and outdoor public places whenever close contact with others was unavoidable; on April 30, 2021, the Governor issued Addendum 15 to Amended and Restated Executive Order No. 01-20, rescinding the portion of the mask mandate applicable to outdoor public spaces; on May 14, 2021, the Governor issued Addendum 16 to Amended and Restated Executive Order No. 01-20, rescinding the indoor face mask requirement for vaccinated individuals; and on June 15, 2021, the Governor issued Executive Order No. 06-21, marking the end of the state of emergency and addressing “Post Emergency Recovery Activities,” and

Whereas, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the findings of numerous studies indicate that wearing a mask is effective in reducing the spread of COVID-19, both by reducing the emission of virus-laden droplets by symptomatic, asymptomatic, and presymptomatic individuals and by reducing the likelihood that a wearer will inhale infected droplets, and

Whereas, the far more transmittable Delta variant is now driving the surge in COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and deaths in Vermont and around the globe, and

Whereas, despite Vermont consistently having one of the highest vaccination rates in the United States, the State now also has one of the highest per capita rates of COVID-19 infection; as of November 19, 2021, the daily average number of new COVID-19 cases in Vermont had increased 45 percent over the prior 14 days to 352; on November 11, 2021, a record 591 cases were reported; and recently, the testing positivity rate has been in excess of four percent, and

Whereas, on October 25, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention updated its masking guideline, recommending to fully vaccinated individuals that “to maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area of substantial or high transmission,” and

Whereas, as of November 19, 2021, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention identified the entire State of Vermont as an area of high transmission, and

Whereas, pursuant to 20 V.S.A. § 9, the Governor is authorized to declare a state of emergency in response to an all-hazards event, including a health or disease-related emergency, “that causes or may cause substantial damage or injury to persons or property within the State,” and

Whereas, the COVID-19 crisis in Vermont has dramatically worsened and more effective State government responses, similar in scope to those implemented during 2020, must be adopted without delay, *therefore be it*

Resolved by the Senate:

That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Governor Philip Scott to use all possible public health measures to reduce the number of COVID-19 cases and associated deaths and maximize vaccination rates among all eligible population groups, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Governor Philip Scott to increase testing capacity throughout the State, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Governor Philip Scott to expand access to free or low-cost rapid testing options, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Governor Philip Scott to provide stronger guidance and support for schools and health care providers, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Governor Philip Scott to direct the Department of Health to post on its website, and update daily, the COVID-19 case rate for each town and the degree of community transmission in each county using the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines and to make the information readily available on the Department's COVID-19 dashboard and easy to navigate, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Senate of the State of Vermont urges Governor Philip Scott to declare a state of emergency based on the high rates of community transmission of COVID-19 in this State to be followed by a statewide indoor masking requirement, *and be it further*

Resolved: That the Secretary of the Senate be directed to send a copy of this resolution to Governor Philip Scott.