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Southern DAILY

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U.S. Postal Service puts changes on hold after mail-in voting outcry



A U.S. Postal Service badge is pictured during a news conference about the postal service in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, U.S., August 18, 2020. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri

WASHINGTON (Reuters) - U.S. Postmaster General Louis DeJoy on Tuesday suspended all mail service changes until after the November election, bowing to an outcry by Democrats that the moves appeared to be an attempt to boost President Donald Trump's re-election chances.

A U.S. Postal Service badge is pictured during a news conference about the postal service in the Manhattan borough of New York City, New York, U.S., August 18, 2020. REUTERS/Carlo Allegri
The reversal follows charges by Democrats and others that service cuts could slow the handling of mail-in ballots, the use of which is expected to skyrocket for the election as the coronavirus pandemic raises fears of crowds.

These critics have accused the Republican president of trying to hobble the Postal Service to suppress mail-in voting as he trails Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden in opinion polls ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

"I am suspending these initiatives until after the election is concluded," DeJoy said in a statement, adding that the changes are to "avoid even the appearance of any impact on election mail."

DeJoy, a major political donor and ally of Trump, assumed the job in June.

DeJoy also said that the Postal Service will not change retail hours at post offices as well as that mail collection boxes will remain where they are and no mail processing facilities will be closed.

The reversal followed a lengthy call by the postal board of governors on Monday night, two people briefed on the matter said.

Trump said last week he was against Democratic efforts to include funds for the Postal Service and election infrastructure in coronavirus relief legislation because he wanted to limit mail-in voting during the coronavirus pandemic.

Earlier on Tuesday, states including Washington, Pennsylvania, Connecticut and New York said they were planning legal moves to block the Postal Service changes.

Pennsylvania Attorney General Josh Shapiro suggested he might welcome DeJoy's proposed actions.

"I'll believe it when I see it," Shapiro said. "Hopefully the American people can breathe a sigh of relief. But I will not let my foot off the gas so long as the postal officials continue to violate the law."

Trump has repeatedly and without evidence claimed that mail

balloting is vulnerable to fraud. Voting by mail is nothing new in the United States, and one in four voters cast ballots that way in 2016.

Democrats have raised concerns that Postal Service cost cutting could lead to missed or delayed ballots. They have pointed to reductions in overtime, restrictions on extra mail transportation trips and new mail sorting and delivery policies as changes that threaten to slow mail delivery - and in some cases, already have.

DeJoy is scheduled to testify on Friday before the Republican-led Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs, spokesmen for the committee and the Postal Service said. DeJoy also is scheduled to testify on Monday before the Democratic-led House of Representatives Oversight and Reform Committee.

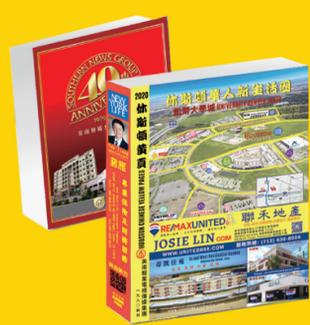
Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union that represents more than 200,000 employees, told Fox News that DeJoy's policy changes "are truly slowing down mail, the customers see it ... the postal workers see it - mail is getting all backed up."

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WEA LEE'S GLOBAL NOTES

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CORONAVIRUS DIARY



NIGHT ONE
DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION 2020



We Are At The Crossroad

Democratic leaders pushed a message of competence and unity in the first night of the party's convention. Former Ohio Governor John Kasich endorsed Biden saying that our country is at the crossroad.

Michelle Obama in her speech said that right now kids in this country are seeing what happens when we stop requiring empathy of one another. They are looking around and wondering if we've been lying to them this whole time about who we are and what we truly value.

New York Governor Cuomo said, "COVID is the symptom and not the illness. Our nation is in crisis and in many ways COVID is just a metaphor."

Democrats also accused President Trump of trying to slow down the mail delivery in the election time, but he said

that he had encouraged everybody to speed up the mail and not to slow down the mail. Newly appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy agreed to testify before Congress next week.

This is really a critical time for all of us and we need to take action now. The United States of America is in a pandemic crisis and our unemployment rate is the highest since the great depression. We really don't care what politicians say. We care about what we can put on the dinner table for our families.

We are living in two different worlds right now: in one world live those people who hold the power of the country with their luxurious lifestyle, and in the other world are the poor people suffering and just trying to survive.



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Publisher Southern Daily Wea H. Lee

Stay Home!

BUSINESS

Wear Mask!

Can Masks Save Us From More Lockdowns? What The Science Says



Scientists estimate that near-universal mask use could make a major difference in bringing down coronavirus infections in the United States. (Photo/Sean Gardner/Getty Images)

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

The American conversation around masks and COVID-19 has taken a dizzying turn. For months, wearing masks has been politicized as a sign of liberal leanings. But in recent days, ever more governors — many of them Republican — have moved to mandate masks. This week President Trump — arguably the nation's most visible mask un-enthusiast — started referring to wearing them as "patriotic."

Now prominent scientists are proposing a radical — and hopeful — possibility: Even as coronavirus cases spiral upward across the United States to levels surpassing this spring's surge, these experts argue that if Americans start wearing masks en masse, the U.S. may yet avoid a return to lockdown measures.

"Look, we've never tried to use masks as our primary strategy when outbreaks are this bad," says Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute. "But I do believe that if we want to avoid a complete lockdown, we've got to at least give it a shot."

Modest — but widespread — protection adds up fast

It seems obvious that masks would re-

duce the spread of a respiratory bug like the coronavirus to at least some degree. After all, when a healthy person wears a mask, the barrier filters out some airborne droplets containing the virus. Even more importantly, when a sick person wears a mask, the barrier holds in many of the viral droplets they exhale. But quantifying the magnitude of this effect on an entire population is more complicated. There are reams of studies using a range of methods to determine how much mask wearing curbs transmission. Many compare what has happened in places where most people have used masks with what has happened in settings where most have not.



These include analyses from China, Germany and states within the United States.

Ali Mokdad is on a research team that has tried to make sense of a large number of these studies. Mokdad and colleagues with the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation did what's called a meta-analysis.

"You take every study that has been published on the protective effect of masks, and then you reanalyze all the data," says Mokdad.

Their bottom-line estimate: If 95% of people wear cloth masks when they're out and about interacting with other people, it reduces transmission by at least 30%. In other words, each infected person will go on to infect 30% fewer people. Mokdad stresses that this is a conservative finding. It uses the lower bound within the range of estimates. And it assumes all the masks are cloth rather than surgical masks or N95 respirators, which are even more effective. "Widespread mask [use] could be even more powerful," says Mokdad, because some portion of people would likely be using those more protective versions.

Yet even with a 30% reduction in transmission, the cumulative impact on a community can be massive. To understand why, it helps to consider some math: The coronavirus spreads exponentially. For example, let's say in a place where no one is wearing masks, each infected person is currently passing the virus to 1.03 others. This means 100 infected people will go on to infect 103 others, who in turn infect 106 others, who infect 109 and so on. The result is that in, say, seven five-day cycles of infection, a total of 889 people will have contracted the virus.

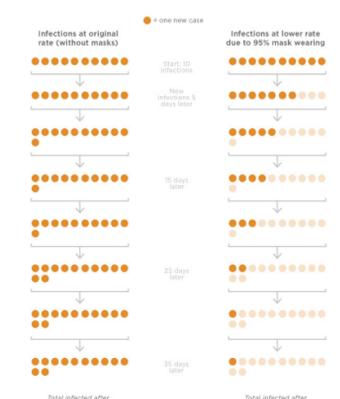


But if you curb the transmission rate by 30%, this means that instead of infecting 1.03 others, each infected person passes the virus on to only 0.72 others. So now 100 infected people go on to infect only 72 people. These 72 go on to infect just 52 people in the next cycle. By the seventh cycle, only 10 new people are infected, and only a total of 332 people

have contracted the virus altogether. Essentially, instead of exponential growth you've triggered what's called exponential decay.

Wearing Masks And Infection Rates
Studies suggest that wide adoption of masks can reduce the spread of the coronavirus. A meta-analysis by Ali Mokdad and his research group at the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation estimates at least a 30% reduction and up to 50%, which can lead to a big difference. (Infographics/Connie Jin, coronavirus, mask, NPR)

If Masks Reduce Transmission By 30%, The Impact Adds Up Fast
In this hypothetical example, with no mask wearing, each infected person passes on the virus to 1.03 others. With 95% mask wearing, transmission drops 30%, so each person now infects 0.72 others. Here's what happens over seven five-day cycles:



To see how this would translate for the entire U.S. population, Mokdad's team at IHME ran a simulation. Based on the pandemic's current trajectory through the U.S., they forecast that by Nov. 1, nearly 80,000 more people will die from COVID-19. But if Americans ramp up from their current level of mask use to 95% use, about 34,000 of those deaths could be avoided, says Mokdad.

An alternative to lockdowns
It gets better. Mokdad's team estimates that communities where the virus is now

surging out of control could still avoid economy-killing lockdowns if they would massively increase mask use.

Here's how they figure this. Based on the U.S. experience this past spring, Mokdad's team estimates there's a point at which local or state health officials will feel they have no choice but to reimpose lockdowns, in spite of the economic and political consequences. That point, they estimate, is when the number of daily deaths tops eight per million people.

Texas is one month from hitting this threshold, according to IHME's current forecast. But if 95% of residents there started wearing masks right now, IHME forecasts that Texas would bend its curve enough to remain under the threshold and could avoid a lockdown.

"There is a lot of hope here," says Mokdad. (Courtesy npr.org)



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Editor's Choice



A man rides a motorbike during heavy rains in New Delhi, India. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi



A television at Buck Bradley's Saloon and Eatery shows former First Lady Michelle Obama speaking at the Democratic National Convention (DNC) in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. REUTERS/Brian Snyder



A health worker and relatives wearing personal protective equipment (PPE) carry the body of a man, who died due to the coronavirus, for his cremation, at a crematorium in New Delhi, India. REUTERS/Adnan Abidi



U.S. President Donald Trump gestures in front of supporters at Basler Flight Service in Oshkosh, Wisconsin. REUTERS/Tom Brenner



Alexa Callander virtually teaches a second grade class for students who are either at home or in a separate classroom as in-person learning resumes with restrictions in place to prevent the spread of coronavirus at Rover Elementary School in Tempe, Arizona. REUTERS/



Former first lady Michelle Obama speaks in a frame grab from the live video feed of the all virtual 2020 Democratic National Convention as participants from across the country are hosted over video links to the originally planned site of the convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin.



The control room where live feeds are managed is in operation for the first night of the virtual Democratic National Convention (DNC) at the Wisconsin Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Scott Olson/Pool via REUTERS



Democratic U.S. presidential candidate and former Vice President Joe Biden appears by video feed from Delaware to question voters about their situations in this video frame grab from the start of the virtual 2020 Democratic National Convention as participants from across the country are hosted over video links to the originally planned site of the convention in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 2020 Democratic National Convention/POOL via REUTERS

Obesity Ups The Odds For Severe COVID-19--Age Is A Factor



The new flu strain is similar to the swine flu that spread globally in 2009

Compiled And Edited By John T. Robbins, Southern Daily Editor

(HealthDay News) -- If you're younger than 65 years old and obese, COVID-19 poses a special danger to you. A new study reports that the more obese you are, the more likely you are to either die from infection with the new coronavirus or require lifesaving mechanical ventilation to survive.

"Increasing obesity was associated with an increased risk of lung failure or death in COVID-19," said lead researcher Dr. Michaela Anderson, a pulmonologist at Columbia University Irving Medical Center in New York City. But obesity only posed a risk for people under 65, researchers added.

Columbia University Irving Medical Center. They looked at body mass index (BMI), which is based on height and weight. Obesity begins at a BMI of 30; morbid obesity is 40 or over.

"At the beginning of the pandemic in New York, we noticed there were a lot of young and obese people who required breathing tubes to help them breathe," Anderson said. "We were hoping to figure out if weight or body mass index or obesity were associated with the likelihood of developing lung failure if you got infected with COVID."

About 25% of the patients died and 22% required mechanical ventilation. On average, they were hospitalized for one week, researchers found. Looking at BMI, researchers found that excess pounds did increase patients' risk of severe COVID-19 -- but only if they were young or middle-aged. Anderson said there are several reasons why obesity might worsen COVID-19 symptoms, starting with simple body mechanics.

"If you have a big, obese belly, does that push up on your lungs and make it harder for you to expand your lungs?" she said. Fat tissue also produces biochemicals known to promote inflammation and blood clotting -- two factors linked to more severe COVID-19 infection, Anderson



added. "Fat tissue doesn't just sit there and store fat," she said. "It also does lots of other things that can influence your health." It also might be that other illnesses associated with obesity, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, contribute to COVID-19's impact on the body, said Dr. Aaron Glatt, chief of infectious diseases at Mount Sinai South Nassau in Hewlett, N.Y. He said this study basically confirms what experts have suspected. "Clearly every study has shown obesity potentially contributes to more severe illness, more intubations and even death," said Glatt, who wasn't part of the new research. Based on the evidence, folks who are obese might want to hew even more closely to social distancing and other methods of protecting themselves against infection, Anderson said.

"It's important for doctors and patients to really think about how long they should prolong social distancing, whether they should continue to try to avoid contact until the pandemic is under better control," she said. "People who are obese and young may want to consider prolonged social distancing and minimizing risks for a little longer than people who are not obese."

Glatt agreed. "Every person should attempt to minimize their exposure to COVID, regardless if they are obese or not, regardless if they have risk factors or not," Glatt said. "The more risk factors you have, the more risk-averse you should be." (Courtesy WebMD)

Related New Blood Test Might Spot Most Dangerous COVID Cases

A simple blood test may predict which COVID-19 patients are likely to get worse and die, a new study suggests. "When we first started treating COVID-19 patients, we watched them get better or get worse, but we didn't know why," said researcher Dr. Juan Reyes. He's an assistant professor of medicine at the George

Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences, in Washington, D.C. "Some initial studies had come out of China showing certain biomarkers were associated with bad outcomes. There was a desire to see if that was true for our patients here in the U.S.," Reyes said in a school news release.



For the study, Reyes and his colleagues evaluated nearly 300 patients with COVID-19 admitted to George Washington Hospital between March 12 and May 9, 2020. Of these, 200 had all the biomarkers being studied, namely, IL-6, D-dimer, CRP, LDH and ferritin. Higher levels of these markers were tied with inflammation and bleeding disorders, and an increased risk of being admitted to the intensive care unit, needing ventilator support, and death, the researchers found.

Study author Dr. Shant Ayanian said, "We hope these biomarkers help physicians determine how aggressively they need to treat patients, whether a patient should be discharged, and how to monitor patients who are going home, among other clinical decisions." Ayanian is an assistant professor of medicine at George Washington School of Medicine and Health Sciences.

Currently, doctors base the risk of COVID-19 getting worse or being fatal on age and underlying medical conditions. But this simple blood test may aid in making clinical decisions, the researchers said. (Courtesy HealthDay News and WebMD). This report was also published online in the journal Future Medicine.

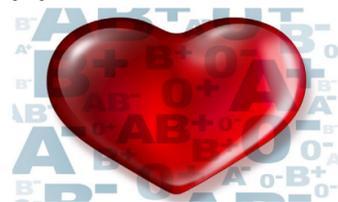
Related How your blood type could influence your risk of getting COVID-19

Some people are more at risk of getting COVID-19. More men seem to get the virus than women. People between 30 and 79 years old seem to get the virus more than people in their 20s. And people in their 20s get it more than teens and children. All that said, there's still a lot we don't know about the virus and

risk factors, which is why researchers are working around the clock to get this virus figured out. And the good news is, they're uncovering more information every day. But some of the information that's coming to light is surprising.

People with this blood type may have a bigger risk

A recent study from researchers in China shows that people with type A blood have a significantly higher risk of COVID-19 than people with other blood types. The study included data from 2,173 people with COVID-19 who were admitted to three hospitals in Wuhan and Shenzhen. Researchers looked at blood type distribution among the general population in those areas and compared it to blood type distribution among people with COVID-19.



Here's what they found. People with type A blood had the highest risk. People with type B blood had the second-highest risk. People with type AB blood had the third-highest risk. And people with type O blood had the lowest risk.

Now, this study is preliminary. It hasn't been peer-reviewed, and it's far from the last word on the matter. But it appears that having type A blood could put you at an elevated risk for COVID-19. And actually, the connection between blood type and viral susceptibility has been demonstrated before. Blood type is determined by the antigens (molecules) on the surface of blood cells. Certain viruses require certain antigens to latch on to. Norovirus, the virus that causes stomach flu, is one example. It affects people with type B blood less because that blood doesn't have the antigens it needs to do its dirty work. There may be something similar happening with COVID-19, but it's far too early to know for sure. (Courtesy https://easyhealthoptions.com/)

休市新聞 Daily News

前第一夫人在民主黨全國代表大會上指責特朗普的白宮“混亂”和“缺乏同情心”

【美南新聞記者泉深報道】美國前第一夫人米歇爾·奧巴馬 (Michelle Obama) 在周一 (8月17日) 晚上的一場嚴密而充滿火藥味的民主黨全國代表大會開幕之夜的演講中, 指責特朗普總統的白宮在“混亂”中運作, 而沒有“同情心”。她敦促選民衆喬·拜登投票, 選民的生活取決於這次投票。

米歇爾在預先錄制的講話中強調了“總統職位的強大力量”, 同時表示這項工作“需要頭腦清醒的判斷力, 對複雜和相互競爭的問題的掌握力, 以及道德的指南針和傾聽的能力。”

她補充說: “每當我們向白宮尋求一些領導力, 或諮詢或任何穩定跡象時, 我們所得到的就是混亂、分裂和完全缺乏同情心。”

民主黨人廣泛地稱贊前第一夫人的講話是對現政府的有力起訴。但是, 這也是在第一個晚上計劃會議結束之前進行的。該計劃有時帶有暗淡的語氣, 尤其是在參議員伯尼·桑德斯 (Bernie Sanders) 一再表示美國正面臨“威權主義”威脅的情況下。

參議員伯尼·桑德斯說2020年總統大選是美國現代史上最重要的選舉。

特朗普競選顧問史蒂夫·科爾特斯告訴福克斯新聞的勞拉·英格拉漢姆, 他們展示了美國的“反烏托邦”照片。而且, 在伊娃·朗格利亞 (Eva Longoria) 主持的音樂表演和新聞形式的視頻插播立法者的言論時, 這種不尋常的格式在有史以來的第一次的虛擬政治大會上也引起了人們的關注。

但是米歇爾·奧巴馬在慷慨激昂的講話中, 試圖將一切都綁在一起, 認為特朗普是“我們國家的錯誤總統”。

她說: “他已經有足夠的時間了……他顯然已經過了頭。” “他無法滿足這一刻 (冠狀病毒大流行), 他根本不能成為我們需要他為我們服務的人。”

她補充說: “他就是這樣。” (這可能是特朗普對冠狀病毒死亡的臭名昭著的評論。)

前第一夫人繼續警告: “如果您認為事情不會變得更糟, 請相信我, 他們可以, 如果我們在這次選舉中不做任何改變, 他們也會這樣做。”

她說: “如果我們有希望結束這場混亂局面, 我們必須像喬·拜登一樣投票, 就像我們的生活取決於它一樣。” “我認為喬是一個以信仰為指導的極為體面的人。” 儘管她指出喬·拜登也是有缺點和錯誤, 但總統也不是完美的人。



前第一夫人沒有提到拜登的競選夥伴、加利福尼亞州參議員卡馬拉·哈里斯 (Kamala Harris), 她是第一位被提名為主要政黨副總統候選人的有色女性。福克斯新聞被告知視頻是在哈里斯被任命之前錄制的。在這麼重要的會議, 這麼關鍵的問題上, 前第一夫人沒有提到副總統候選人, 顯然是一次嚴重失誤, 也會讓哈里斯的支持者失望。

前第一夫人還感歎 “正在向下一代展示的美國”。

她說: “一個表現不佳的國家, 不僅在政策問題上, 而且在品格問題上, 不僅令人失望, 而且令人發指。” 她指出, 她知道全國各地的“善良與恩典”。

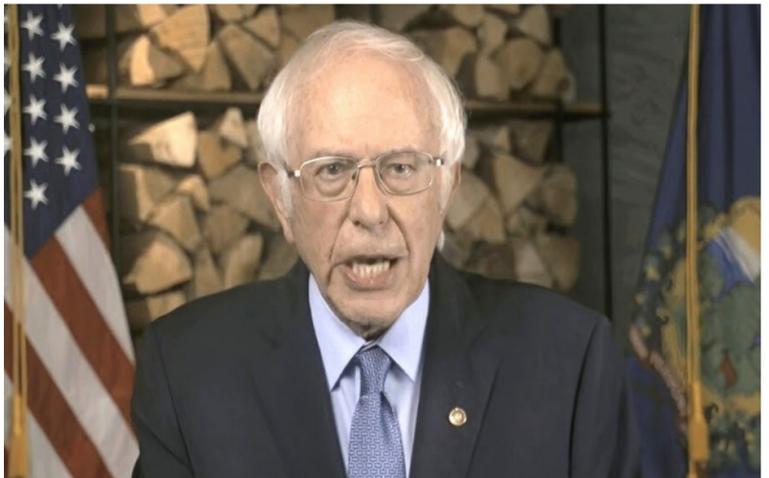
前第一夫人說, “同情”是她最近“一直在思考的東西”。白宮卻缺乏同情心。

她說: “有能力穿上別人的鞋子, 認識到別人的經歷也很有價值。” “我們大多數人對此深有體會。”

她繼續說, 美國的孩子們 “正在看到當我們停止要求彼此同情時會發生什麼。”

她說: “他們四處張望, 想知道我們是否一直在對他們說話。” “他們看到人們在雜貨店裏大喊大叫, 不願戴口罩以確保我們所有人的安全; 他們看到人們只是因為膚色的原因而呼籲警察關注他們的生意……他們看到我們的領導人在標榜同胞為敵人的州政府, 同時鼓舞了持火炬的白人至上主義者。” (看來自由女神像也在清除名單之列)。

同時, 前第一夫人提到了“他們 (共和黨) 在走下坡路, 我



們 (民主黨) 在走上坡路”的口號, 並解釋說 “走上坡路是唯一有效的方法”, 但並不總是意味著好。

她說: “當我們走下坡路, 貶低其他人並使其失去人性時, 我們只是成為淹沒其他一切聲音的一部分。” “我們要明確一點: 當面對惡毒和殘酷時, 走上坡路並不意味著對人微笑並說出好話。” (該出手時就出手)。

她補充說: “走上坡路意味著要走的更高, 爬到那個山巔。”