

Texas governor bans mandated COVID-19 'vaccine passports'

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Texas Gov. Greg Abbott used his executive power Tuesday to ban state government and some private entities from requiring COVID-19 "vaccine passports" to access services, in the latest move from a

Republican governor pitting public health campaigns against personal freedom and private choices.

According to Abbott's order, state agencies and political subdivisions, and public and private organizations that receive [public funding](#) in Texas cannot require people to prove that they have been inoculated against the [coronavirus](#).

The mandate also states that it will supersede any conflicting local executive orders and calls for the Texas Legislature to take up COVID-19 vaccine requirements during its ongoing current session.

"We will continue to vaccinate more Texans and protect [public health](#)—and we will do so without treading on Texans' personal freedoms," Abbott said in a statement announcing the order.

Abbott said the U.S. Constitution does not empower the federal government to mandate proof of vaccination. The White House has ruled out a national "vaccine passport," saying it is leaving it to the private sector to develop a system for people to show they've been vaccinated. The Biden administration is developing guidelines for such passports, touching on privacy, accuracy and equity.

Some other countries are establishing national databases to allow vaccinated people to resume normal activities. The White House says it won't back such a system in the U.S.

In Florida, Gov. Ron DeSantis issued a [similar executive order Friday](#), banning businesses from requiring customers to prove they have been vaccinated against COVID-19 to get service and barred any government agency in Florida from issuing such documentation to provide proof of vaccinations.

Texas health officials reported 4,167 new confirmed COVID-19 cases Tuesday, and the addition of 1,580 other previously unreported cases took the state's pandemic total to just over 2.8 million. Of those, an estimated 69,241 cases were active Tuesday and 2,882 cases required hospitalization on Monday, the most recent data available. Those were 110 more hospitalizations than Sunday.

According to Johns Hopkins University data, 73 more COVID-19 deaths took the Texas pandemic death toll to 48,748. There were 172 new Texas cases per 100,000 people over the past two weeks, which ranks 36th in the country for new cases per capita, with the rolling average number of daily new cases decreasing by 721.3 over the past two weeks, a decrease of 19.6%, according to Johns Hopkins data.

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