

bit.ly/SaveMyRightToMask

MaskTogetherAmerica™

Stop Mask Bans for Love

—A friendly clarification from MaskTogetherAmerica that our "*StopMaskBans*" national campaign is about love.

1. Masking = Love and Community Care. As a grassroots organization for public health and health equity, MaskTogetherAmerica launched a national awareness campaign called

'Stop Mask Bans' in May to stand with all vulnerable disabled and high risk people, including Long Covid patients, who cannot survive without mask protection. MaskTogetherAmerica's founder Julie Lam posted a statement on May 17 to promote a petition created by our advisor Victoria Coble, Founder of COVID ACTION GSO. On May 19, Coble was featured on MaskTogetherAmerica's public platforms, holding a sign, "Stop the Mask Ban NC HOUSE BILL 237" — to promote the petition to oppose the mask ban in North Carolina. MaskTogetherAmerica initiated the hashtag #StopMaskBans on Instagram, Facebook, Threads and X, and subsequently launched a nationwide letter campaign through Action Network to fight for Americans' right to masking outdoors, indoors, in transit, gatherings, workplaces and schools. Mask bans are disability injustice and violation of human rights. Our letter campaign asks our government to prohibit mask banning because masking is an effective and essential tool for infection control.

2. MaskTogetherAmerica's campaign is cosponsored by COVID ACTION GSO, Pan End It, World Health Network, San Francisco Senior and Disability Action, and Long COVID Justice. Our advocacy against mask bans has been publicly recognized in the news, including USA Today, Forbes Magazine, Prism, Newsday. Read our news coverage on mask bans here.
3. Masking intersects health, privacy, security, and public perception. While masks are often assumed to obscure identity, research suggests that sunglasses are more effective for concealment. Moreover, modern technology can still identify masked individuals through methods like retinal or iris scanning, gait analysis and partial facial recognition. Law enforcement agencies are widely using facial recognition technology on driver's license photos, stored in DMV's databases. Airport security now uses retina scans or fingerprint recognition in place of traditional ID. This means masks provide limited protection from identification by authorities equipped with such technologies.
4. People who wear masks already face stigmatization. Anti-mask policies could spur more harassment of people who wear masks. Fear of being judged and even penalized may force people to give up protecting their health and even their vulnerable family members. Unable to have mask protection, people can, and already feel pressured to choose between personal safety and full participation in public life. This potential exclusion highlights the need for acceptance of masking in public spaces—to allow people to make health-conscious choices without fear of legal and social repercussions.
5. Our StopMaskBans campaign, initiated in May 2024, focuses solely on public health and people's human rights to health equity against discrimination of race, disabilities and social disparity. Our volunteers publicly share their masked portraits to help normalize sickness prevention. The biographies of our team members are public information. **Transparency** is extremely important to our work.
6. Support depoliticization of public health! That's part of our mission. We promote vaccination, masking, cleaning air, testing and isolation to support public health. Masks are a mitigation tool for public health. Masks are lifesaving and indispensable to people with medical conditions, especially with compromised immune systems. Universal masking is a symbol of love. **Masking is not a symbol of a political agenda**. Masking and other preventive tools including vaccines and lockdowns have been politicized. Mixing masking with any political ideologies will fuel mask banning by governments and private companies, causing more damage to our country's rapidly deteriorating pandemic preparedness and endangering the high-risk and underserved populations.

7. MaskTogetherAmerica is a team of public health advocates working together from all over the country since 2020. We are volunteers. We are asking for your recognition and support of our campaign. We encourage everyone to use and share our toolkit to STOP MASK BANS. Please post on social media masked selfies with #StopMaskBans and #MaskTogetherAmerica to show your solidarity with the high-risk patients, Long COVID patients and everyone who wants to prevent sickness in the U.S.

   Take action with us:

   —Share our toolkit: bit.ly/StopMaskBans
   —Use and promote our letter campaign on Action Network: bit.ly/3XLuhqG

8. Important disclaimers: MaskTogetherAmerica was initiated by Julie Lam, a writer, artist, an immunocompromised Long Hauler and public health advocate in New York. In 2020, Lam initiated this volunteer organization which doesn't receive financial support from anyone. MaskTogetherAmerica completely relies on individual volunteers' collaboration in creating posts for raising awareness. All the grassroots actions from MaskTogetherAmerica do not collect email addresses or distribute them. MaskTogetherAmerica does not endorse any products or businesses. All the active members at MaskTogetherAmerica are grateful to the tens of thousands following social media accounts that make us a successful public health advocacy campaign in 2024. To learn more about us or to join this grassroots movement, go to MaskTogetherAmerica.org or email masktogetheramerica@gmail.com.

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Link to this document: bit.ly/StopMaskBans4LOVE