

# COVID-19 emergency to be lifted in April

By Sara Cline  
Associated Press/Report for America

PORTLAND (AP) — Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said Thursday, February 24, she will rescind her state-wide COVID-19 emergency declaration on April 1.

In addition, Oregon’s mask requirement for indoor public places and schools will be lifted on March 19, officials said. Both announcements come as COVID-19 hospitalizations and case numbers continue to decrease in the state.

“Lifting Oregon’s COVID-19 emergency declaration today does not mean that the pandemic is over, or that COVID-19 is no longer a significant concern,” Brown said.

The emergency declaration, which was first announced in March 2020, has been the legal underpinning for the executive orders the governor has issued throughout the pandemic — including orders surrounding reopening the state, vaccine mandates, childcare, liability protections for schools and higher education operations.

While many of Brown’s coronavirus-related executive orders were lifted in June 2021, the declaration has also been used to provide help to overwhelmed healthcare systems, by activating the Oregon National Guard and providing volunteer medical providers in hospitals and at vaccination clinics, during the omicron surge.

Oregon officials also announced that indoor mask requirements will be lifted on March 19, nearly two weeks ahead of the state-set March 31 deadline.

Officials say that the reasoning behind lifting the mask requirement earlier is due to decreasing hospitalizations. Health officials predict that by March 20, there will be 400 or fewer people per day hospitalized with the virus in Oregon—a level the state experienced prior to the arrival of the omicron variant.

Daily COVID-19 hospitalizations have declined 48 percent since peaking in late January. Over the past two weeks, hospitalizations have fallen by an average of more than 30 a day. Yesterday, there were 579 people hospitalized with COVID-19 across the state.

## LETTERS

Continued from page 7

Our issue was ultimately resolved by a letter from the fire marshal stating that our home and property meets or exceeds all standards set by the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire District. But the experience is a warning shot across the bows of local homeowners. The inability to acquire or renew insurance coverage will ultimately have a deleterious impact on real estate values, and may ultimately prevent the ability to sell your home — a thing many are considering as Sisters continues its relentless campaign to pack 20 pounds of crap into a five-pound bag.

Craig Rullman

## Support for McLeod-Skinner

To the Editor:

The first words in the Constitution of the United States are “We the people.” What it most certainly does not say is “we the pharmaceutical industry.” Unfortunately, Kurt Schrader, who is running for reelection in Oregon’s 5th Congressional District, which now includes Central Oregon, takes this oligarchic approach to politics. However, Jamie McLeod-Skinner is challenging this incumbent, and unlike Schrader, she does not seek support from these powerful corporations.

Let’s start with the facts. During 2021 and 2022, Kurt Schrader’s top contributor was the pharmaceutical industry, at a grand total of \$92,500 so far, as reported by [opensecrets.org](http://opensecrets.org).

Furthermore, as reported by outlets last September, Schrader opposed an opportunity to reduce drug prices through reconciliation. As an alternative, he proposed a separate bill, which hasn’t moved forward since. Coincidence? I think not.

As someone who depends on prescription medication for my well-being, I was heartbroken by this. That being said, I am not alone in my frustration, as I am one of many who pay ludicrous prices for prescription drugs that yield the pharmaceutical industry’s absurd profits.

However, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, in her past campaigns, has never taken a single dollar of money from the pharmaceutical industry. She is continuing this pledge with her current campaign, and with her candidacy we have a chance for change.

To my fellow Central Oregonians, if we wish our government to represent us and not big-pharma, unseating a politician like Schrader and electing a grassroots candidate like McLeod-Skinner is a first step. If you are registered to vote

in the Democratic primary on May 17, let’s make our nation more representative of us and vote for Jamie McLeod-Skinner.

Harrison Sky Wiltse

## ‘Oklahoma!’

To the Editor:

Congratulations to Sisters High School and everyone who had a hand in producing Oklahoma. It was a fantastic performance with a large cast. Only one down side: A lot of the dialogue was unclear to understand. Even though they were miked the words did not come through clearly.

What an undertaking. Well done!

Diana Raske and Al Lovgren

## Primary voting

To the Editor:

Vote in May because your vote counts! Unless you are *not* registered as a Republican (R) or a Democrat (D); in which case, your voting power is limited. May primary elections include partisan and nonpartisan open seats. Only partisan seats have a primary; candidates of the same primary party compete to be the one D or R candidate in the November election. Nonpartisan seats generally have one-and-done elections.

No matter your party affiliation, nonpartisan candidates are on your May ballot per your voting districts. Sisters’ redefined districts are Congressional District 5 (used to be in CD2) and State House District 53 (no longer in HD54). Sisters is still in State Senate District 27. Each of these district seats is partisan.

If not registered R or D, you will not have any partisan candidates on your May ballot. This is because Oregon has *closed primaries*. Thus, you will have no vote in deciding which D or R candidate is on your ballot in November. Understandably, you may not like either party. Unfortunately, these are the only parties in primaries and their candidates usually get elected and then, make decisions impacting all voters.

What to do? You can temporarily change your party affiliation before May and change it back before November. This expands your voting power and actually reduces electing fringe officials into office because historically, it’s the most incentivized/fringe voters who vote in May primaries. Voters have until April 26 to register or to change registration information for the May primary.

Susan Cobb

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