



COVID-19 Survey Summary: March 18, 2022

The following is a summary of social, behavioral and economic survey research on COVID-19 released in the past week, as compiled for the Societal Experts Action Network ([SEAN](#)). Most surveys cited in this report are available in the [SEAN COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

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Polls this week find nearly two-thirds support for eliminating all coronavirus restrictions by federal, state and local governments, with broad majorities saying it's time to move toward reopening. With cases their lowest since summer, so too are risk perceptions and reported mask use and social distancing.

Still, the public appears ready to adapt. If cases reemerge in their area, three-quarters say they'd resume or maintain precautions. Three-quarters believe personal actions such as vaccination, mask wearing and social distancing are helpful in curbing the spread of the virus.

Among other results, one in five workers reports that their employer has asked remote workers to come back for in-person work. Businesses are easing mask and vaccine/testing requirements for their employees. And assessments of Joe Biden's handling of the pandemic have improved since January, though the virus increasingly is seen as a lower-level priority for the government.

Other polls investigate the effect of the pandemic on participation in organized religion and find that health access and utilization among children decreased in the pandemic's first year.

Polls among adults in New York City and Maryland, as well as international results from Chile, Mexico and Russia, are included this week.

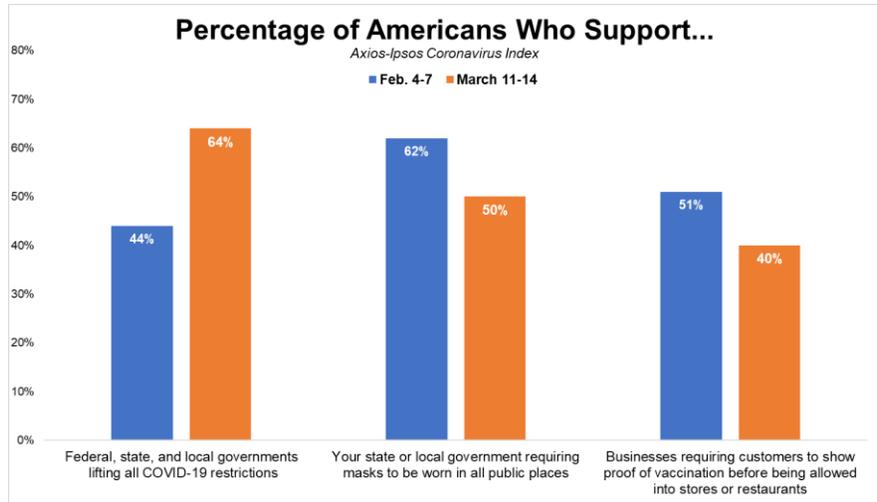
Transitions & Pandemic Policy

Sixty-four percent of Americans support eliminating federal, state and local coronavirus restrictions, up 10 points in two weeks and 20 points since early February, with gains across political and demographic groups. Large partisan differences persist, with support ranging from 85 percent of Republicans and 68 percent of independents to 42 percent of Democrats.

Asked another way, the public splits 50-49 percent on support for state and local governments requiring masks to be worn in all public places, down from 67-32 percent in early January. A quarter say they're under such requirements, compared with 46 percent in early February.

Most, 59 percent, oppose businesses requiring customers to show proof of vaccination, up 11 points in a month.

Three-quarters favor moving to reopening, including three in 10 who say this should be done as soon as possible with no mandates. Just two in 10 favor maintaining or increasing precautions and requirements, down from 44 percent in early February ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)).



Similarly, in another poll, two-thirds of registered voters say the coronavirus never will go away fully and we should “find ways to get on with life without major restrictions” and an additional 13 percent think it never was a serious threat and “we should just move on.” Two in 10 think the virus still is a serious threat that should continue to be treated as a public health emergency, with restrictions ([WSJ 3/2-3/7](#)).

Still, a broad majority is willing to act if the situation worsens. Seventy-four percent say they’d likely continue or resume wearing a mask if infections increase again where they live, including 53 percent very likely. A similar 72 percent say that if cases surge in their area, they’ll get “vaccinated or boosted, wear a mask and social distance.”

Three-quarters think individual actions such as vaccinations, masking and social distancing are helpful in stopping the spread of the virus. Twenty-three percent see little impact ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)).

Concerns & Outlooks

Cases continue to fall nationwide, now their lowest since summer, before the Delta surge. Deaths linked to the virus are down 60 percent from their pandemic peak, though still averaged over [1,000](#) per day in the week ending March 16.

Given improvements since the start of the year, the share who see a large or moderate risk in returning to their normal pre-coronavirus life has fallen from 59 percent in late January to 33 percent now, the fewest since last June. Thirty-two percent are extremely or very concerned about the coronavirus, down from half in early January.

Optimism is up, with three-quarters saying the country is moving toward a time when the coronavirus won’t disrupt daily life, an increase from 66 percent two weeks ago. The number who think it will take more than a year for them to return to their normal pre-coronavirus life (if

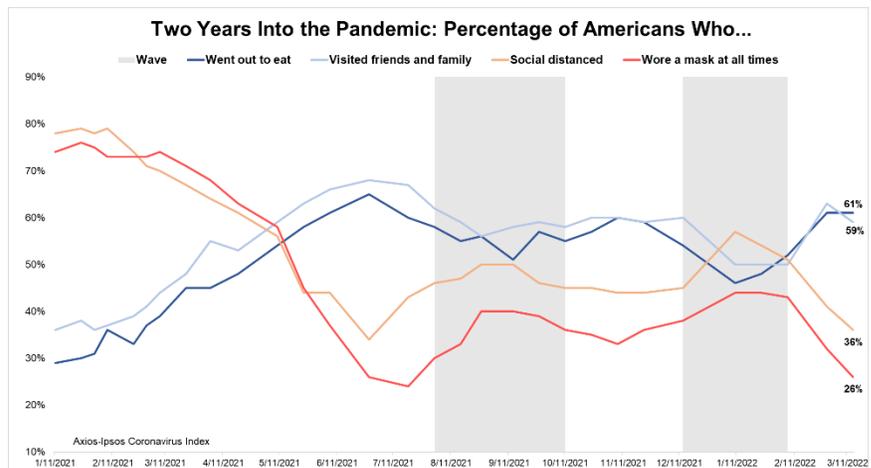
ever) is down from 52 percent in early January to a quarter now. Thirty-two percent say they already have returned to normality, double the share two months ago.

At the same time, 68 percent continue to express concern about new strains of the virus that may be more transmissible or dangerous, including a third who are highly concerned about this. Only 16 percent think we'll be able to eradicate the virus in the United States in the next year; 56 percent do not think this will happen and 28 percent are unsure. Eighty-three percent agree that the coronavirus has changed Americans' lives forever ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)).

Daily Life & Precautions

Americans are continuing to reemerge, with the fewest since last summer taking precautionary measures:

- Thirty-six percent social distanced (i.e., stayed at home and avoided others as much as possible) in the past week, down 21 points since early January to the fewest since June.
- Just more than half, 53 percent, report wearing a mask at least sometimes when leaving their home, down from 71 percent in early February. This includes a quarter who wear a mask at all times, down from 43 percent. Each is its lowest since July.
- Sixty-one percent went out to eat in the past week, matching the most since July. It was fewer than half, 46 percent, in early January.
- Fifty-nine percent visited friends or relatives in the past week, vs. half at the height of the Omicron surge.



Reports of well-being are up. Half say their home life is very good, compared with roughly four in 10 in the first year of the pandemic; 45 percent describe their mental health as very good, vs. roughly a third in 2020; and four in 10 say their emotional well-being is very good, compared with 27 to 33 percent in 2020 ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)).

Pandemic & Work

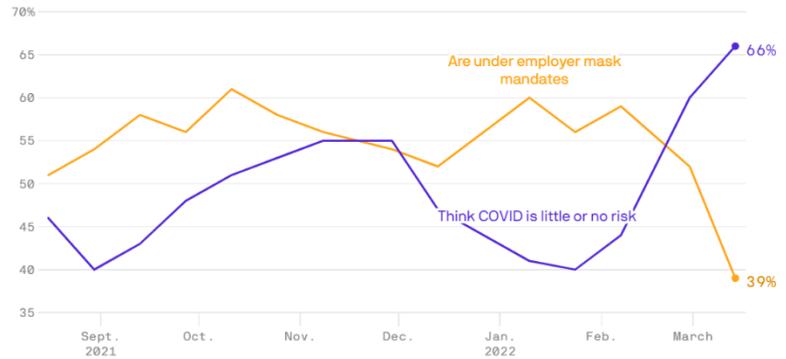
Two polls this week find that businesses are easing mask and vaccine requirements for their employees. In one, 39 percent of working adults say their employer requires all employees to wear a mask, down from six in 10 in early February ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)). Another survey, among small businesses, finds that 7 percent are requiring negative coronavirus tests for their

employees to come in to work, half as many as in mid-January. Eleven percent require proof of vaccination, down from 15 percent ([U.S. Census Bureau 3/7-3/13](#)).

Remote work is on the decline. A quarter of employed adults report working remotely, down from 32 percent in early February to match its level before the Omicron surge. Nineteen percent say their employer has asked remote/home-based workers to start coming back to the office ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)).

Percentage of Americans who...

Survey of up to 1,105 American adults; Aug. 16, 2021, to March 14, 2022



Data: Axios/Ipsos poll; Chart: Will Chase/Axios

Government Response

Americans divide on Biden’s handling of the pandemic in two polls, while a majority approves in a third. It’s 49-44 percent, approve-disapprove, in one, improved from 39-55 percent in early January ([Quinnipiac 3/10-3/14](#)). It’s 49-49 percent among registered voters in another ([WSJ 3/2-3/7](#)). The third has it at 56-42 percent, with approval up six points from late January ([ABC-Ipsos 3/11-3/12](#)).

Few registered voters, 5 percent, call the coronavirus the top priority for Biden and Congress; leading the list are inflation and the economy (cited by half) and the Russia-Ukraine war (25 percent) ([WSJ 3/2-3/7](#)). Seventy-nine percent are more concerned about Russia’s invasion of Ukraine than about the coronavirus ([Quinnipiac 3/10-3/14](#)).

Overall, more voters continue to see the Democratic Party as able to get the pandemic under control than the Republican Party, 42 vs. 31 percent ([WSJ 3/2-3/7](#)).

Coronavirus Information

Americans split 50-48 percent, [agree-disagree](#), on the statement “the media is overexaggerating the threat COVID-19 causes.” A third say it’s true that more than 1,000 people in the United States are dying every day from the coronavirus; 51 percent don’t know, while 15 percent say this is false. Sixty-five percent say masks have been shown to limit the spread of the coronavirus, down from 86 percent in October 2020.

Sixty-two percent have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the CDC to provide accurate information about the coronavirus, largely steady since August though down from 88 percent at the onset of the pandemic. Fewer than half, 45 percent, trust network TV news (ABC, CBS or NBC) to provide accurate information. Three in 10 trust “conservative news.”

Few accepts myths that the coronavirus vaccines are more deadly than the virus itself (7 percent) or carry a microchip (3 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)).

Vaccines

Vaccine uptake remains steady, with 78 percent of adults in one poll and 77 percent of registered voters in another saying they've received at least one dose. Among them, 71 and 72 percent, respectively, say they're fully vaccinated and boosted ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#), [WSJ 3/2-3/7](#)).

The [CDC's estimate](#) of uptake among adults, based on administrative data, is far higher, at 88 percent, while its estimate of booster uptake is much lower, 48 percent among fully vaccinated adults, vs. 73 percent of this population in the Axios-Ipsos data. The agency's estimates are affected by challenges differentiating between first, second and third doses in its data.

Parents are more hesitant when it comes to vaccinating their minor children. Sixty-two percent say they'll likely get their child vaccinated (21 percent) or already have done so (41 percent) ([Axios-Ipsos 3/11-3/14](#)). The uptake estimate is higher, 52 percent, in another study, among registered voters with minor children in their household ([WSJ 3/2-3/7](#)).

A CDC analysis finds that vaccine uptake among 5- to 11-year-olds lags in areas high in social vulnerability, measured by an index that takes into account per capita income, unemployment, educational attainment and the percentage of single-parent households, among other indicators. Twenty-seven percent of children age 5-11 had received at least one vaccine dose by Jan. 18, ranging from 21 percent of children in high SVI areas to 29 percent of those in low SVI areas. The disparities persisted despite similar access to pediatric vaccine providers, with nine in 10 children in high- and low-SVI areas alike living within five miles of a provider ([CDC 11/1-1/18](#)).

Church Attendance

In a newly released survey from late November and early December, 31 percent of adults said the pandemic decreased their ability to participate in organized religious or spiritual activities. Fifty-eight percent said it had no impact; 3 percent said it increased their ability to participate.

Twenty percent reported attending religious services online at least once a month at the time of the survey, compared with 14 percent saying they did so before the pandemic. Twenty-eight percent said they attended religious services in person at least once a month, vs. 36 percent who said they did this before the pandemic ([Ipsos-Episcopal Church 11/22-12/2](#)).

Children's Health

Health care access and utilization among minor children decreased in the second half of 2020 compared with 2019. Fewer parents and caregivers reported preventative medical visits for their children in the previous 12 months (-6.9 points to 74.1 percent) or preventative dental visits (-5.3 points to 74.9 percent).

More reported diagnoses of behavior or conduct problems among children, up 1.4 points to 8.1 percent; and unmet health care needs, up 1.0 point to 4.0 percent (significant given large sample sizes). Prevalence of anxiety problems (9.2 percent) and depression (4.0 percent) reached a series

high, with incremental increases since 2016 on these measures. Additionally, 12.6 percent of parents with children age 0-5 said they quit, declined or changed a job due to child care problems within the previous year, up from 9.4 percent in 2019 ([Lebrun-Harris et al., 2022](#)).

State & Local Results

In New York City, 79 percent are optimistic the city is nearing the end of the pandemic. Sixty-four percent approve of how Mayor Eric Adams is handling it ([Marist 3/1-3/8](#)).

In Maryland, 44 percent think pace at which their local jurisdiction is lifting restrictions is about right, while the rest split between thinking it's moving too quickly (28 percent) or too slowly (25 percent). Fifty-three percent are concerned that they or someone in their family will get the coronavirus, compared with 71 percent at this time last year.

Seventy-one percent approve of how their local health department has handled the pandemic; 70 percent say the same for Gov. Larry Hogan and 68 percent for the state Department of Health. Most also approve of how their elected officials (66 percent), the Democrats in the General Assembly (58 percent) and the CDC (55 percent) have handled it ([Goucher College 3/1-3/6](#)).

International Results

In Mexico, 9 percent call the coronavirus the main problem facing the country, down from 26 percent in January to match its lowest in data since July 2020. Forty-seven percent think the country is emerging from the pandemic and an additional 8 percent say it's already over; 41 percent think it will be around for a long time. More than nine in 10 report having received at least one vaccine dose and 52 percent say they've gotten three doses. Among the vaccinated, half have received the AstraZeneca vaccine, a third Pfizer and a quarter the Russian Sputnik V ([El Financiero 3/11-3/12](#)).

In Chile, 42 percent are worried about catching the coronavirus, down from 61 percent in late January at the height of the latest surge. A third fear the Omicron variant specifically, down from about half two months ago ([Cadem 3/9-3/11](#)).

Six in 10 Russians say they adapted to lifestyle changes during the pandemic; half say there were positive changes in their lives. Forty-four percent learned new skills. Two in 10 say freedom of movement was what they missed most, while one in 10 piece missed life without masks and in-person communication. Forty-one percent fear they will catch the coronavirus, down 17 points from a year ago. Six in 10 say the government is taking adequate precautions ([VCIOM 2/2022](#)).

Additional U.S. and international poll results are available at the [COVID-19 Survey Archive](#).

Summary for SEAN by [Langer Research Associates](#).