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FOR UTAH GOVERNOR

BROWN LT. GOVERNOR

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Peterson campaign to call for immediate changes to Utah Coronavirus response; press conference today, July 15 at 10 a.m. at corner of State Street and 1st Ave, Salt Lake City

July 15, 2020—Salt Lake City, Utah Democratic candidate for governor Chris Peterson is calling for substantial revisions to Utah’s coronavirus pandemic response.

Peterson will hold a press conference at 10 a.m. today, July 15, at 51 North State Street at the corner of 1st Avenue and State Street in downtown Salt Lake City.

Peterson will call for a statewide mandate to wear masks in public. His remarks will compare the needed pandemic response to Utah’s response to the historic 1983 flood where state leaders turned State Street into a temporary river to channel a flood away from cultural landmarks and the downtown business district.

“When a natural disaster strikes—be it a flood or a viral pandemic—Utahns must put aside their differences, come together in a spirit of community service, and act decisively to protect our state,” Peterson said. “Like sandbags in a flood, facemasks are a simple and time-tested tool that can limit the invisible virus engulfing our neighborhoods.”

Peterson will also call on Gov. Gary Herbert and Lt. Gov. Spencer Cox, who leads the state’s COVID-19 task force, to immediately adopt policy changes to stop the spread of coronavirus in Utah.

“Utah’s COVID response so far is a story of failed leadership,” Peterson said. “The worst part of the pandemic both in terms of public health and economic harm is still ahead of us. If our public servants do not lead, we are risking an economic and health catastrophe.”

Peterson will be joined by his Lt. gov. running mate Karina Brown. Ms. Brown will deliver brief remarks on the need for rural Utah to do its part in addressing the natural disaster.

“The aggressive, preventive efforts we make now to stop the spread of the virus will mean a safer educational environment for Utah children and teachers, and a safer work environment at businesses,” Brown said. “Utahns have come together in the past to overcome difficult challenges and now is the time to unite in our efforts to stop the spread of coronavirus.”

[Dr. Brian Poole, a professor of microbiology at Brigham Young University](#), will also join Mr. Peterson at the press conference. Dr. Poole will deliver brief remarks on scientific evidence documenting the coronavirus pandemic and the need for immediate changes to the state’s pandemic response.

Peterson will call on Herbert and Cox to adopt the following major policy changes:

- **Statewide Mask Mandate for Public Spaces.** Utah should adopt a temporary statewide mandatory mask requirement in indoor and outdoor public spaces where social distancing isn't possible. The federal Center for Disease Control (CDC) currently recommends that people wear face coverings in public settings and when around people outside of their household when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain. Face masks have now proven effective at helping limit the spread of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. More than 20 states have now issued orders requiring people to wear face masks in public. The list of states with mandatory mask orders includes California, Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Nevada, New York, New Jersey, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Virginia, Washington, and West Virginia. Many countries that have been more successful than the United States in limiting the spread of the coronavirus have also adopted mask mandates including France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Spain, South Korea, and most recently the United Kingdom.
- **Develop and implement an emergency plan for production, ordering, and stockpiling of N95 respirator masks for frontline workers.** Growing scientific evidence suggests that the coronavirus can stay afloat for hours and spreads through airborne transmission. Frontline workers who work in close contact with the public are better protected from transmission by wearing N95 masks which remove particles from breathed air. These respirator masks filter out at least 95% of very small (0.3 micron) particles. N95 masks are capable of filtering out all types of particles, including bacteria and viruses. After months of delay, Utah still faces an unacceptable shortage of N95 masks. The Utah Coronavirus Taskforce should immediately develop a plan to manufacture, purchase, and distribute N95 to frontline workers in close contact with the public—including teachers and school staff. The Utah Coronavirus Taskforce plan should also include cooperation with private industry as necessary to assist businesses in providing N95 masks to their frontline employees where appropriate.
- **Develop and implement an emergency plan to provide adequate coronavirus testing.** According to the Harvard Global Health Institute, Utah currently [ranks 37th](#) in the country in testing progress. Because asymptomatic people infected with the virus can transmit it to others, testing for the Coronavirus is critical in suppressing transmission. Utah’s testing efforts have been plagued by inaccuracy, inexperience, and delays in test

processing times. Despite months of delay, Utah still does not have sufficient testing to suppress the spread of the coronavirus. The Utah Coronavirus Taskforce should immediately revise its testing plans and implement a program sufficient to track and suppress the spread of the disease.

- **Develop and implement a plan to provide resources necessary to safely reopen Utah’s public schools before next month.** Without a plan to keep our kids, teachers, and school staff safe, schools could turn into COVID-19 superspreader sites. Utah is not currently on track to provide a safe environment for students, teachers, and staff in our public school system next month. Currently, Utahns do not know if our kids and teachers will be safe when they return to school next month and the Utah Coronavirus Taskforce has not provided adequate tests, tracing, and personal protective equipment resources to reopen schools safely. The acceptable number of student deaths is zero. The acceptable number of teacher deaths is zero. The acceptable number of staff deaths is zero.
- **Develop and implement a plan to provide contact tracing to suppress the spread of the coronavirus.** Utah does not currently have a sufficient contact tracing plan in place. The existing plan relied on a \$6 million no-bid contract to develop a web app that has now failed to successfully trace the outbreak. Currently, [better software is available free of charge to the state](#). Since May, Apple and Google launched an addition to their respective mobile phone operating systems that would help track exposure to COVID-19. These systems are designed to protect the privacy of individual users while also avoiding false reports. The state needs to provide sufficient human contact tracers to keep Utahns safe.

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