

Maine lawmaker organizes protest of governor's coronavirus stay-at-home order

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A Republican state lawmaker in Maine is organizing a march to protest restrictions Democratic Gov. Janet Mills has ordered to slow the spread of [coronavirus](#), according to reports.

Rep. Chris Johansen is hosting a "Re-Open Maine" convoy that will circle the governor's mansion in Augusta on Monday to [protest](#) Mills' stay-at-home order, [Newsweek](#) reported. Another group plans on protesting at the state Capitol the same day.

Johansen's Facebook event page for the protest says, "It is time we sent our governor this message: 'Maine needs to get back to work, we understand that this disease is contagious, and we are responsibly following the guidelines,'" [Newsweek](#) reported.

[CALIFORNIA PROTEST ERUPTS OVER STATE'S CORONAVIRUS STAY-AT-HOME RULES](#)

Protests like the one being planned by Johansen, mostly organized by conservative groups and supporters of President Trump, have been staged this week at statehouses around the country, including in Wisconsin, Michigan and Virginia, according to the [Portland Press Herald](#).

In Michigan, thousands of demonstrators – some openly carrying rifles and other firearms--rallied on the steps of the State Capitol in Lansing on Wednesday in opposition to expanded stay at home orders imposed by Gov. Gretchen Whitmer to combat the coronavirus.

On Friday, a protest in Huntington Beach in Southern California drew more than 200 demonstrators demanding an end to the state's stay-at-home order, according to reports.

They carried placards saying, "Defy Fascist Lockdown," "Stop the Tyranny, Open California," and "We Deem Our Governor Non Essential."

[RALLIES TO REOPEN ECONOMY SPREAD ACROSS COUNTRY AS OFFICIALS URGE CAUTION TO PREVENT CORONAVIRUS RESURGENCE](#)

Maine residents have been ordered to stay home until May 15.



People take part in a protest for "Michiganders Against Excessive Quarantine" at the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan on April 15, 2020. - The group is upset with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer's(D-MI) expanded the states stay-at-home order to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (Photo by JEFF KOWALSKY/AFP via Getty Images)

On Friday, Mills said she would soon unveil plans for a phased-in reopening "tailored to the demographics and various economic sectors of our state" without elaborating.

Johansen is telling those who show up for the protest to bring bullhorns, carry flags and wear Trump's "Make America Great Again" hats, according to Newsweek. He has also told them to wear face masks and adhere to social distancing guidelines.

Johansen told the Press Herald that he believes the coronavirus poses a public health threat, but he thinks the risks are lower in rural counties than in more densely populated counties like Cumberland and York, where most of the confirmed cases are.

He said some of the restrictions Mills imposed in her executive orders should be relaxed in rural areas, according to the paper.

"When it first happened, it was probably reasonable, but we need to adjust it now," Johansen said. "More than half the state of Maine has no cases."

Only two people have tested positive for COVID-19 in Aroostook County, where Johansen lives, according to the paper.

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There have been 827 Maine residents who have tested positive for the coronavirus and 29 have died, the paper reported.



People take part in a protest for "Michiganders Against Excessive Quarantine" at the Michigan State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan on April 15, 2020. - The group is upset with Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer's(D-MI) expanded the states stay-at-home order to contain the spread of the coronavirus. (Photo by JEFF KOWALSKY/AFP via Getty Images)

According to the Press Herald, Johansen acknowledged that protesters will be taking a risk and said he is concerned about his own health.

"I wouldn't be doing it if it just wasn't so important to these businesses," Johansen said. "We've got to figure something out; we can't have the same rules for places like Aroostook County that we do for Cumberland and York."

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"We are going to cut them a lot of slack. We understand people want to have their voices heard, and if they do it in a reasonable manner I don't think there are going to a lot of problems," Capitol Police Chief Russell Gauvin said of the Monday protest., according to the paper.