

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Contact: Sheridan Betts

Phone: (405)496-6115

1889 Statement Regarding Calls for Declaration of Emergency

OKLAHOMA CITY (August 4, 2021)—*The 1889 Institute, an Oklahoma think tank, has released the following statement in response to the recent clamor over the Delta variant of COVID-19 and increased calls for Gov. Kevin Stitt to issue a declaration of emergency.*

The state of Oklahoma is currently experiencing a [spike](#) in COVID-19 cases that have been largely attributed to the Delta variant. As a result, there is a [growing movement](#) calling for Gov. Kevin Stitt to declare a state of emergency. The 1889 Institute believes that such an action is unwarranted and, based on the efficacy of the actions taken under the previous state of emergency, would most likely be ineffective. Considering the economic cost of the shutdowns, the social and developmental impacts from school closures, and the unproven efficacy of mask mandates, one must seriously consider the facts before plunging the state into another costly state of emergency.

The facts:

- Children are largely unsusceptible to the virus. [According to](#) data compiled by the *New York Times*, the chance of a child getting a serious case of COVID-19 is very small, and the chance of them dying is even smaller. To put it in perspective, it is 2-3 times more likely that a child will die from flu or pneumonia, and almost ten times more likely that a child will die in a car accident than from COVID-19.
- Susceptible populations, such as the 65+ age group, show very high rates of vaccination ([over 75 percent](#) in Oklahoma). In addition, a number of vaccines are readily available (for free) to anyone who wants one.
- The data show that the vaccine is extremely effective at preventing serious cases and/or death. [According to](#) the CDC, more than 163 million Americans have been vaccinated. Of those, approximately .004 percent were hospitalized with a breakthrough COVID-19 case, and fewer than .001 percent have died.
- The Delta variant may be more contagious than previous iterations of COVID-19; however, the data show that it could be less lethal than the others. Consider India, where the Delta variant was rampant just a few weeks ago. The [deaths per million](#) population is roughly one sixth that of the U.S.

We at the 1889 Institute believe that individuals and parents can be trusted to make informed decisions about their own—and their children’s—health. In addition, vulnerable populations have multiple tools at their disposal to protect themselves should they choose to use them.

While some prefer an authoritarian reaction to this alleged emergency, Gov. Stitt has implicitly stated he has no intention of issuing such a declaration. The governor should continue to support liberty by entrusting individuals with the power to make decisions regarding their health.