



## **TEXAS GOVERNOR PAUSES REOPENING THE STATE AS COVID-19 CASES RISE**

*Interview by Andy Uhler  
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"On Friday morning, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott issued an executive order requiring bars to close and putting restrictions on outdoor gatherings. Abbott also scaled back restaurant dining, the most dramatic reversals yet as confirmed coronavirus cases surge.

Abbott also said rafting and tubing outfitters on Texas' popular rivers must close and that outdoor gatherings of 100 people or more must be approved by local governments.

More than 39,000 new cases of COVID-19 were reported in the U.S. just Thursday, a new record. Some businesses are shutting down again: Apple has ordered the re-closing of 18 stores in the U.S., including seven stores in Houston, because of spikes.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said Thursday he was "pausing" the reopening of the state. But he said he's not telling any businesses to re-close.

Among Texans who have been tested for COVID-19 in the past week, 1 out of 10 has it.

"As you look at the trends and then you look at our openings, you can see some patterns there and they're not surprising," said Marilyn Felkner, who teaches public health at the University of Texas at Austin.

Since May, the governor has gradually pulled back social distancing requirements. Felkner said each time, Texas sees an uptick in cases.

Right now, most businesses can operate at 50% capacity. But rules vary by city. Depending where you are in Texas, you might be required to wear a mask, which leads to confusion among consumers and business owners.

"Businesses need to be able to get back open, but we're not going to be able to unless business owners, and then every Texan, take seriously the fact that this is in some ways in our own hands," said **Justin Yancy, president of the Texas Business Leadership Council.**

Gov. Abbott said Thursday, "The last thing we want to do as a state is go backwards and close down businesses." But he may have to do just that if the trend continues and COVID-19 keeps spreading."

*With reporting from The Associated Press*

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