



[Dr. Fauci Warns of Serious Consequences if the U.S. Reopens Too Soon](#)

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the prominent infectious disease specialist leading the nation's fight against COVID-19, issued a stark warning that opening the country too soon could lead to harsh consequences. Fauci testified before senators on Tuesday that reopening the country before it was safe to do so could have severe repercussions, including a second outbreak of the virus. He also repudiated President Trump's message from earlier in the week, by saying that while containment of the virus was moving in the right direction, it was not yet under control. The president has been projecting a more positive message, saying on Monday that the United States had "prevailed" in its fight with the virus. Fauci also rejected the president's claim that the virus would go away without a vaccine, which he had told Republican senators on a conference call late last week.

Dr. Fauci rejected claims that opening the economy was worth the risk of the virus spreading rapidly, saying that if the country opened too quickly, a second, more stringent lockdown would be inevitable, which would only serve to hurt the economy more. Fauci also emphasized the importance of states following the federal guidelines to reopen, which was in turn criticized by Democratic senators. Sen. Chris Murphy of Connecticut told Dr. Fauci that the administration's guidelines had been "criminally vague" and Sen. Patty Murray of Washington said that "corruption and political interference" were plaguing the administration's response to the pandemic.

Contrasting this response, Republican senators pressed Dr. Fauci on the importance of re-opening the economy so that children could return to school and small businesses could re-hire furloughed employees. Dr. Fauci and Sen. Lamar Alexander agreed on the importance of widespread testing as the first step of reopening, and Fauci warned senators not to be "cavalier" particularly in sending children back to school since there are still so many unknowns about the virus. A moment of controversy occurred during Dr. Fauci's testimony when Sen. Rand Paul confronted him and said he didn't believe Fauci was the "end-all" and that there were people whose opinions differed from his on reopening the economy. Dr. Fauci responded that he had never presented himself as anything other than a public health official. Senator Mitt Romney was the lone Republican to push back against the administration's rhetoric, saying that the United States "treaded water" during the early stages of the outbreak, which put the country at a disadvantage.

A key part of Dr. Fauci's testimony was when he spoke about the likeliness of a vaccine being developed. He said that while one was not immediately in the offing, it was "definitely not a long shot" of one being developed. However, Fauci also warned that it was unlikely one was developed before August, which would subsequently force him to caution against schools re-opening in the fall. He said that developing a vaccine would be the most surefire way to prevent a second wave of the virus and ensure a speedy return to normalcy.