

RELEASE: UNMASKED HOUSE REPUBLICANS PUT ENTIRE NH HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AT RISK FOR COVID-19 EXPOSURE

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PRESS RELEASE

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CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE –Today, the House of Representatives met in session at the University of New Hampshire for Organization Day, as is required by the state constitution. Over 100 members chose to forgo attending the in-person session citing health concerns due to COVID-19 exposure by the House Republican caucus, and opted to be sworn in virtually by the Governor and Executive Council tomorrow, Thursday December 3. **House Democratic Leader, Representative Renny Cushing (D-Hampton)** released the following statement:

“Today, House Republicans put their colleagues, legislative and UNH staff, and all of our communities at risk for COVID-19. An estimated 50 or more House Republicans refused to wear masks today, even after DHHS confirmed that multiple members were exposed to COVID-19 during a caucus event just 12 days ago at McIntyre Ski Area. By DHHS guidelines, their entire caucus should be quarantined and tested before interacting with the public, let alone interacting in a legislative body of 400. The blatant disregard for public health is unconscionable, especially as daily case numbers in New Hampshire are the highest they have ever been.”

“Granite Staters are sick, dying, and struggling to pay bills and provide for their families this holiday season. While Granite State businesses are working around the clock to adhere to ever-changing safety protocols and stay afloat, House Republicans are unabashedly clinging to their senseless and dangerous anti-science narrative. When asked what he would do to enforce masks in the *specific* mask-compliant seating sections today, Speaker Hinch refused to provide an answer. It is my fervent hope that House Republicans will come together with Democrats to find safe solutions for legislating during a pandemic this year. For the good of the state, this deadly display of partisanship cannot happen again.”

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On Background:

- WMUR reported on 12/1 that an unspecified number of Republican caucus members tested positive for the COVID-19 virus after attending an unmasked caucus to elect their nominee for

Speaker.

- Tweet from Adam Sexton:

<https://twitter.com/AdamSextonWMUR/status/1333785357494611976?s=20>

- Rep Andrew Bouldin offered an amendment to House Rules that would have required the Speaker to offer the ability of members to participate in legislative activity remotely. Republican House members voted in a partisan block to deny this rule.