The United States has surged past 2 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, according to the latest data compiled by Johns Hopkins University.

This figure represents over a quarter of the 7.4 million cases confirmed worldwide, and over 114,000 people have died from the disease in the United States.

The abandonment of social distancing guidelines, coinciding with the “back to work drive” initiated after the Memorial Day weekend holiday, May 24–26, has led to a dramatic spike in cases across the country.

Twelve US states—Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Michigan, Arkansas, Florida, South Carolina, Delaware and Hawaii—have all seen a 25 percent or more spike in average cases within the last week. Arizona in particular, which opened up casinos even before Las Vegas did on June 4, has seen the largest increase of any US state, with a 49 percent increase in average cases in the last seven days. Since officially reopening on May 15, the amount of patients on ventilators has increased 400 percent, with 1,412 new cases and 32 deaths reported on Thursday alone.

In Georgia, which reported 993 cases on Thursday, the most in over a month and a 37 percent increase over the previous seven-day average, Republican Governor Brian Kemp went ahead with two executive orders, the first which removed shelter in place orders for persons age 65 and older, the second, effective June 16, which allows gatherings of up to 50 people “if they remain six feet apart.” Guidelines for maintaining seating distance and number of patrons per square feet are also being lifted.

Governor Rick DeSantis of Florida is similarly moving ahead with plans to reopen schools, announcing a three-step reopening process that aims to have fully open campuses by August. These plans are being made despite the fact that the state set a new record in confirmed cases, 1,698, surpassing the previous high of 1,419 new cases set last week on June 4.

Ignoring these worrying and deadly trends, governors across the country, driven by material economic interests, are continuing to move forward with “phased re-openings” of states and businesses, forcing workers back into dangerous and socially unnecessary settings such as casinos, bars, restaurants and movie theaters.

The virus has continued to spread unchecked in giant factories and farm houses, which companies and government regulators have continued to falsely claim as “safe,” affecting thousands of workers, including immigrants, among meatpacking employees, farmers, transportation workers, as well as Amazon and logistics workers who were deemed “essential” but treated as “expendable.”

Fruit-packing and agriculture workers in Yakima County, Washington, who have engaged in a series of strikes since May demanding personal protective equipment and a hazard pay increase, have continued to fall ill, putting themselves, their families and the US fruit and vegetable supply in jeopardy.

According to data gathered by Reuters, by the end of May there were 600 cases of COVID-19 among agriculture workers in the county. As of June 10, Yakima County had 4,834 known cases, the highest per capita infection rate on the West Coast.

The rising number of infections, along with absenteeism from workers not willing to needlessly risk their lives, prompted rumblings from the Trump administration last month to invoke the Defense Production Act.

Alabama also set a record for the number of positive cases in a single day on Thursday, with 848 new cases, a 93 percent increase over the previous seven-day
average. The state has reported 22,474 cases and 750 deaths so far. However these numbers, as all US figures, should be considered drastic undercounts due to the lack of effective testing and reporting as covered previously on the WSWS.

Speaking to the *New York Times*, Dr. Howard Markel, University of Michigan professor and policy adviser during the George W. Bush administration, plainly stated what is evident from the silence of leading Democrats and Republicans: “They have made a conscious decision that we are moving on.”

Yet neither big-business party is entertaining the possibility of another shutdown to halt the dangerous spread.

From the time the World Health Organization declared that COVID-19 was a “public health emergency of international concern” on January 30, the supreme priority of the US ruling class, first among the governments of the world, was to safeguard the wealth of the oligarchy above all else.

Globally, it took 62 days for the virus to infect 1 million people. However, it only took 13 days for that number to double, which it has continued to do approximately every 12 days until reaching 4 million cases in early May. Since then the number of cases has increased at an exponential rate, passing 5 million cases 11 days later, 6 million 10 days after that, and 7 million cases only 8 days after that.

Despite these staggering figures, which will lead to thousands of unnecessary and preventable deaths, there have been no calls for the implementation of another lockdown from within the political establishment. This is because while the lockdown proved to be the only effective method of stopping the spread of the virus—absent a vaccine and an effective testing and tracing program—another shutdown would cripple Wall Street future earnings statements, sending stockholders’ and business executives’ stock portfolios, already resting on a house of cards, into the tank.

Despite the best efforts of the US Congress to shower these parasites with unlimited sums of money through the unanimously passed CARES Act, which made available trillions of dollars to corporate America, reality has now reasserted itself. On Thursday, the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped over 1,800 points, the worst decline in three months, as worrisome data on rising infection rates continued to be reported.

The decision by the US government to “move on” is shared by capitalist governments around the world.

In South America, Brazil continues to lead the continent and the world in new confirmed daily cases with 32,913 cases reported today. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, like his US counterpart Donald Trump and UK partner Boris Johnson, has advocated for infecting the whole population despite no scientific evidence antibodies gained from overcoming COVID-19 will last for any extended period of time.

Across sub-Saharan Africa, there are now over 200,000 confirmed cases. The *Washington Post* is reporting that Pierre Nkurunziza, the president of Burundi who died on Tuesday, is the first world leader to die of COVID-19. However, government officials have stated that the cause of death was cardiac arrest.

In Pakistan cases have surged, according to WHO officials, who have urged the entire country to lock down after more than 100 deaths were reported on Tuesday. Overall, the country has over 108,000 confirmed cases and a death toll approaching 2,500 as of this writing.