

Two Hundred Thousand Deaths

As Fall 2020 begins today, the United States death toll from COVID-19 stands at over 200,000 – in six months. In six months over three times as many Americans have died from COVID-19 as died in the Vietnam war. The table below shows that the virus has offered close to “equal opportunity” death among the regions with the four largest states (California, Texas, Florida, and New York) leading the country, and growing Georgia jumping into the top five.

Coronavirus Cases and Deaths

USA State	Total Cases	New Cases	Total Deaths	New Deaths	Total Recovered	Active Cases	Tot Cases/ 1M pop	Deaths/ 1M pop	Total Tests	Tests/ 1M pop	Population
USA Total	7,051,048	4,832	204,706	200	4,301,469	2,544,873	21,302	618	98,964,491	298,984	
<u>California</u>	790,679		15,071		399,311	376,297	20,011	381	13,672,782	346,039	39,512,223
<u>Texas</u>	733,173		15,254		628,986	88,933	25,285	526	6,073,766	209,470	28,995,881
<u>Florida</u>	685,439		13,324		218,784	453,331	31,914	620	5,120,391	238,405	21,477,737
<u>New York</u>	484,436		33,185		388,221	63,030	24,902	1,706	9,980,765	513,056	19,453,561
<u>Georgia</u>	307,339		6,604		74,037	226,698	28,947	622	3,066,767	288,843	10,617,423

Source:

<https://www.worldometers.info/coronavirus/country/us/?fbclid=IwAR0j6ke5MgKK9eQGY1CeD0m9KZsUP2UjzGO4nBAhUEryA-NVqjroKTQ0-Bs>

Your blogger (YB) has calculated the economic costs several times over the past six months, but valuing a life lost at \$5,000,000 (a conservative number), the economic toll has been slightly over one trillion dollars in lives lost, alone. We have become used to losing 30,000 lives per month. At this rate, we will have lost 400,000 lives by the time we hit the one-year mark in March, 2021.

There is every reason to view this as an underestimate. Personal examples abound. Almost everyone knows someone who found it too difficult to get treatment for a non-COVID-19 condition, and died. Such deaths will not be recorded as COVID-related ... but they are. Many may recover from COVID-19, but their organs may be scarred by COVID-19 and they may die sooner, more often, or more painfully than others. Such deaths will also be related to COVID-19. It is difficult to put a number on these kinds of deaths, but if they constitute even an additional 10 percent, this would account for 20,000 additional COVID-related deaths.

Can the US afford another lockdown to attack COVID-19? They are considering one in the United Kingdom. CNN reported:

September 22, 2020

British Health Minister Matt Hancock said Sunday that the country was "at a tipping point" following a new rise in cases on Saturday, when Britain registered 4,422 new cases, the highest number since early May.

"People must follow the rules and if they don't, we will bring in this much more stringent measures," Matt Hancock said in a BBC interview. When asked about re-imposing a second national lockdown, the minister said: "I don't rule it out. I don't want to see it."

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/09/19/europe/europe-second-wave-coronavirus-intl/index.html>

Economists like YB like to talk about decision-making in terms of marginal benefits and marginal costs. If the marginal benefits exceed the marginal cost of an activity, one should do it. If not ... not. We have reopened our economy from the March/April lockdown. We have more activity and more output ... at the cost of 30,000 lives (over \$150 billion) per month.

COVID-19 drives a hard bargain.

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