

Kushner's coronavirus team shied away from a national strategy, believing that the virus was hitting Democratic states hardest and that they could blame governors, report says

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- Some members of Jared Kushner's coronavirus task force believed the pandemic would affect Democratic areas worse and may have adjusted accordingly, [Vanity Fair](#) reported.
- In March and early April, Kushner gathered a team to devise a nationwide coronavirus testing plan.
- An public-health expert in regular contact with the team told the magazine that "the political folks" thought a nationwide response was a bad political move.
- At the time, outbreaks were worst in Democratic-voting states and cities. The source suggested that some close to Kushner thought it was best to hold back and blame governors.
- The White House has refuted this source's account, saying it is "completely incorrect."
- Kushner's plan was indeed dropped in favor of a mainly state-by-state response. Since then, cases have surged in states on both sides of the political divide.
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Members of Jared Kushner's coronavirus task force considered a national-scale testing plan early in the US's coronavirus outbreak.

However, [according to a new Vanity Fair report](#), the plan never came to be, partly because the task force thought it would be better politically to hold off.

The logic, a source told Vanity Fair, was that the virus would hit Democratic-voting areas hardest and that the damage could be blamed on governors instead.

In March and early April, Kushner, a senior White House adviser, [led a task force](#), parallel to the White House's official efforts, to devise a plan to accelerate coronavirus testing and supply chains nationwide.

Ultimately, that was abandoned, and President Donald Trump shifted much of the responsibility for controlling outbreaks [to individual states](#).

A public-health expert who was in regular contact with Kushner's team told Vanity Fair's Katherine Eban that political reasoning may have influenced the decision.

"The political folks believed that because it was going to be relegated to Democratic states, that they could blame those governors, and that would be an effective political strategy," the unnamed expert said.

The expert also said the final call would have been Kushner's. "It was very clear that Jared was ultimately the decision maker as to what [plan] was going to come out," they said.

In a statement, White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany refuted the claims made in the Vanity Fair article, saying: "The premise of this article is entirely false."

She added: "Further, the article is completely incorrect in its assertion that any plan was stopped for political or other reasons."

When the team was working, New York was the epicenter of the US's coronavirus outbreak, with more than 300,000 cases by early April.

It's not the first time the Trump administration has been accused of using politicized reasoning in its pandemic response.

The president wore a face mask in public for the first time in early July, and he has recently signaled a more serious take on a pandemic that he had previously downplayed.

On Monday, however, reports emerged that Trump's pivot may have been motivated by advisers showing him increases in cases in Republican and swing states — "our people," a senior administration official told The Washington Post.

Several states, both red and blue, have seen significant increases in coronavirus cases since beginning to ease lockdowns. Arizona, Florida, and Texas — all of which have Republican governors — are among the states that now have more than 1,000 cases per 100,000 people.