

Mandates and Liberty: Where Should We Draw the Line?

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Charles M. Bauervic Foundation

March 20, 2022

Dearborn Heights, MI

To live in the United States affords us freedom of rights, but vaccine mandates infringe on these given rights. There has been controversy about whether or not vaccinations should be mandated. The dispute over compulsory immunizations has had increasing publicity as the spread of Covid-19 proliferates. While some believe vaccines are safe and can benefit people, a growing segment of society is against them. Vaccines should not be mandated, nor abolished. They should not be forced, only fostered to those who want to receive one. There should be limitations on vaccinations because it is immoral to force another to do something, especially concerning their health. Mandating vaccines goes against peoples' freedoms and decision-making, and some anti-vaccinationists will refuse and likely protest the mandating of vaccines.

Mandated vaccines should be limited to protect all peoples' liberties. They should have the choice to do what they want when it concerns their physical wellness. It is the opinion of many that mandating anything, especially vaccines, will lead to the substantial belief that their rights are being contravened. "Forcing people to undertake a medical procedure is not the American way and is a clear civil rights violation no matter how proponents may seek to justify it" (Vann, 2021). Larry Cosme argues that there are no justifications for forcing a medical procedure, such as getting vaccinated. Just as it is unacceptable to force someone to consume certain foods, it should not be permissible to receive a vaccine. The choice to consume any substance is in the interest of the consumer. Mandating vaccines will transgress the privileges of citizens.

Decision-making is a manageable right to give to people. We have this freedom when determining any solution. It is a claim supported by countless Americans, and it should not be deducted from their rights. As stated by a former US representative, "Freedom over one's physical person is the most basic freedom of all, and people in a free society should be sovereign

over their bodies. When we give the government the power to make medical decisions for us, we in essence accept that the state owns our bodies” (ProCon.org, 2021). Possessing management over oneself is a given privilege when living in America. It is a necessity to provide ownership over our bodies and decisions regarding them. This includes the decision on vaccinations. Being granted the freedom of choice is something citizens cannot lose to mandation laws.

Numerous individuals consider vaccines to be helpful and believe that there will not be repercussions to mandating them. This claim is denied by a majority of people in society. There is a set of people, known as anti-vaccinationists, who will protest the mandation of them. “Several experts expressed their concern about a potentially counterproductive effect, fearing that it could ‘convert vaccine hesitancy into a more extreme anti-vaccination stance’ or ‘fuel further unfounded resistance to life-saving vaccines” (Lévy-Bruhl et al., 2019). The possibility of demurral will increase the resistance of all vaccines. Protests will lead to some boycotting all vaccines and those protests will instill fear in people. Kamenetz (2021) says there have been people protesting since 1882 against the government mandating vaccines. It evinces the unacceptance of mandates because there have already been protests repudiating those who support vaccine mandates. Limiting the mandate of immunizations will allow people the choice of which vaccines they do and do not receive.

Employees should not be obligated to receive a vaccine if they do not choose to. It should not be a requirement because it will lead to more vaccine resistance. Adults at work will show more defiance if vaccines are necessitated. People will become more irresolute when asked if they want to take a vaccine. “COVID-19 vaccine mandates—particularly for adults—may be ineffective or, worse, prompt backlash. Employer-enforced employee mandates did not garner majority acceptance” (Largent et al., 2020). When the idea of mandatory vaccines was

mentioned to employees, they did not support the proposal. It may lead to a reduction in laborers in the workforce. They will no longer want to fulfill the responsibilities in their job because they will not accept the mandatory vaccine protocol. It is in the preference of the employee to choose which vaccines they take.

Compulsory vaccines are also a concern in the school setting. Many students, as well as parents, do not want to get vaccinated. Both the children and adults have a fear that there could be side effects, whether long or short term, which may affect their daily lives. "A large majority (88%) of parents [...] say they are "very" or "somewhat" concerned that not enough is known about its long-term effects in children. Nearly as many (79%) say that they are concerned that their child might experience serious side effects" (Palosky, 2021). There is a belief that not enough is known about the vaccine, and some parents do not want their child to take the risk of suffering any unknown after-effects. The percentages prove that a substantial number of parents are perturbed by vaccines, particularly the COVID-19 vaccine. Although it can contribute to the protection of severe illness, the side effects can be direr than the virus.

It is undeniable that vaccines help reduce the hospitalization rate of those who get sick with a virus. Vaccinations are better encouraged rather than mandated, allowing people to decide what choices they make regarding their health, while also considering the health of those in their community. As said by Jeff Renaud (2021), "Mandatory vaccination should be considered only if it is necessary for, and proportionate to, the achievement of an important public health goal." As of now, the safety of people can be achieved without mandating vaccines. Requiring them could lead to push back from those who do not want to get immunized. It is currently possible to protect those in the community without necessitating immunizations. Those who prefer to get vaccinated are able, but if someone prefers not to, they are not compelled to do so.

There is also a major question on the ethicality of compulsory vaccines. Some claims justify mandates and their effectiveness, suggesting they are in the best interest of all people. Conversely, other averments have elucidated the unethical aspects of mandatory vaccines. For example, John et al. (2021) had stated, “Administration of a vaccine requires verbal, informed consent. Mandates eliminate the right to informed consent or refusal of treatment.” For personal independence, the choice to be vaccinated is of great importance. To force that procedure would then become unethical because it counteracts the given freedom of citizens. People can no longer give verbal consent to get vaccinated because they will be obligated to do so. This demonstrates the unethicality of mandating a vaccine.

Requiring vaccinations should be limited because of the concomitant increase in resistance. Employees, students, parents, and more, may begin to reject all vaccines. Especially if vaccines are mandated in places of work, there will be more pushback. “But, we need to think about the potential consequences [...] including if this could threaten public trust or lead to reductions in our already overwhelmed health workforce” (Renaud, 2021). There is a portion of the population that may become more hesitant towards vaccines because it will be an involuntary procedure. Mandating them will provoke frustration with people who do not support the decision. Giving consent to accept a vaccine is indispensable for people’s freedom over their health. Those who deny the choice of getting vaccinated against any virus made the decision based on personal, distinctive factors. Mandates will constrain people and make them feel ambivalent towards the COVID-19 vaccine and additional vaccines.

The hesitancy brought from this obligation could also lead to distrust of professionals in the medical field. The difference between correct and incorrect information is pivotal to the mass vaccination rates of a community. “Stemming the tide of misinformation, or inaccurate

information, and disinformation, or deliberately misleading information, is critical to increasing vaccination rates across the country” (Conger, 2021). The spread of erroneous information may also prompt backlash and uncertainty when medical professionals announce new information. It will also lead to skepticism of new medication or vaccines. When people discover they have been told invalid information, it will prompt a longer-lasting distrust towards health care and health care professionals. They will then worry about the wariness of something that can potentially be lifesaving.

As Covid-19 and other viruses continue to spread, the question of where to draw vaccine mandate laws becomes more significant. It is agreeable that another pandemic will likely happen in the future. This will again instigate the controversy over vaccine mandates. To have this disagreement will lead to gratuitous conflicts. Keeping vaccine mandates finite will have more benefits than mandating them, both in the present and the future. To keep people’s freedom of rights while staying concerned over safety, vaccines should not be mandatory but recommended instead. To ensure ethicality, morality, liberty, and the protection of people, a rule of mandates should not be enforced.

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