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[Authoritarianism Pandemic is the Real Threat \(/archives/featured-articles/2021/september/06/authoritarianism-pandemic-is-the-real-threat/\)](/archives/featured-articles/2021/september/06/authoritarianism-pandemic-is-the-real-threat/)

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Cook County, Illinois, Judge James Shapiro reached a new low in covid tyranny by forbidding Rebecca Firlit from seeing her 11-year-old son until she receives a covid vaccine. Judge Shapiro is not alone in abusing judicial power to force individuals to get vaccinated. Judges across the country have ordered defendants to get covid vaccines, sometimes as a condition of avoiding prison. This outbreak of judicial tyranny is a symptom of the authoritarianism pandemic that is the real threat to America.

Corporations are imposing requirements, including that employees show proof of vaccination, pay more for health insurance if they have not had a covid vaccine, and undergo regular (in some cases weekly) covid tests. An increasing number of state and local governments are requiring their employees and even people working in some private jobs to take covid vaccines, as well as imposing vaccine passport requirements on people generally.

President Biden has urged employers to implement vaccine mandates, and government is working with its big tech allies to develop “model” vaccine passports.

Government approved model vaccine requirements combined with government officials encouraging their adoption send the message to businesses that imposing vaccine requirements on their employees, and maybe their customers as well, is a good way to stay in the politicians and bureaucrats' good graces.

An effective way for the US government to “encourage” adoption of vaccine mandates and vaccine passports is denying federal funds to businesses, states, local governments, and other institutions that refuse to require employees, customers, or other people to prove they are vaccinated. This will result in vaccine requirements while enabling government to claim it is not forcing vaccines on anyone.

President Biden is already planning for the US government denying Medicare and Medicaid funding to nursing homes that do not require their employees to prove they are vaccinated. This could result in staff shortages at nursing homes. A short-staffed nursing home poses a much greater risk to residents than a nursing home with a staff comprised of healthy, unvaccinated individuals. Texas is experiencing a nursing shortage thanks in part to hospitals firing unvaccinated nurses.

Health care workers have good reason to resist vaccine mandates. Many individuals have died or suffered other adverse effects — including miscarriages — after receiving a vaccine.

Some people try to justify vaccine mandates and vaccine passports by saying that, by risking infecting others, unvaccinated individuals endanger other people. However, the federal Centers for Disease Control recently admitted that covid vaccines do not prevent the spread of infections. In addition, the claim that we are having a “pandemic of the unvaccinated” relies on data collected from early in the year — before many Americans had taken covid vaccines.

An important objection is that, if government can force people to take a potentially dangerous vaccine to protect against a hypothetical harm to others, the same reasoning would support the imposing of many additional liberty violations. These could include, for example, “red flag” laws and other forms of gun control, restrictions on access to “extremist” ideas, or a system of mass surveillance to prevent possible future acts of violence. The argument that government can use force to prevent hypothetical harms renders restraint on government power meaningless.

It is imperative that we support the growing resistance to vaccine mandates and vaccine passports. We must also expand the resistance to covid authoritarianism to resistance to all forms of government infringements on liberty.

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