

Why Vaccine Mandates Are Not An Evil Infringement On Religious Liberty

Description



Question:

Why don't you think vaccine mandates are an evil infringement on religious liberty?

Answer: (by [Melissa DiLernia](#))

This is a question that is on the minds of many. It is a very understandable concern to have. Presently, there seems to be a lot of confusion as to what role the government should play regarding public health. But even though this concern is understandable, I hope that by the end of

this short article, you'll see that it isn't really justifiable. Let's take a moment to consider the issue at hand. First, we can determine if there are any reasonable boundaries to the limits of religious liberty by reflecting on the following questions:

Do you think religious liberty should be given freely to all, regardless of their beliefs and practices? Do you feel comfortable granting unlimited religious liberty to any and all religions outside of your own? Is there anything that would not be okay to allow as a religious liberty even though some may consider it to be their religious belief and practice? What if someone's religion advocated something that was harmful to others — like human sacrifice — would you allow them to claim that practice as their religious liberty? If not, where should we draw the line?

After some contemplation, we can probably agree that there should be certain limits as to what a person is legally permitted to do in the name of religious liberty. Once we've established that there should be a limit as to what is permissible in the realm of religious liberties, we now need to determine what exactly is that limit? As in the example of religious human sacrifice, we can see that causing harm to others is crossing the line and, legally, should not be permitted. It is important to understand that what it means for a government to protect its citizens from harm is, fundamentally, to protect their freedoms. If the government made it lawful for one citizen to physically harm another, that would rob the harmed citizens of their most basic freedoms, such as the freedom to have health and life. If you lose those freedoms, you lose all freedoms. With this in mind, we can see that if one person's behavior causes harm to another, or even if it can be shown that one's behavior has great potential of harming another (as is the case with drinking and driving, for example), protective action needs to be taken.

This is where the government plays its part. The government has the right, and even more importantly, the responsibility, to enact laws that are designed to protect its citizens from harm. So, you may ask, how exactly should the government decide what those laws and regulations should be? Since lawmakers aren't experts in all the complex aspects of science that are relevant to the laws they are making, what should they do? Should they just act upon their own personal opinion? I think it's plain to see, that would not be very responsible. A far better approach would be to make regulations based on the most up-to-date information from experts in each relevant field. In the instance of vaccine mandates, the government relies on the most current information available from virologists and vaccinologists. And it isn't about following what one favored scientist has to say. It's about understanding the consensus among experts. It is by listening to such experts that governments are able to evaluate whether, and to what extent, harm is occurring and then make policies designed to minimize that harm.

Just as it would be wrong for the government to make allowance for someone to practice human sacrifice simply because it is their religious belief to do so, it would be just as wrong for the government to make allowance for someone to perpetuate a pandemic and potentially be the cause of innumerable deaths simply because it is their religious belief to not get vaccinated. As I imagine we agreed upon a moment ago, we can see that religious liberty should have certain limitations, and now I hope we can also agree on where the line should be drawn — religious liberties should be limited to that which does not cause harm to another. The government has the responsibility to keep citizens from harm. If the government thinks people are being harmed and then institutes vaccine mandates to curtail a pandemic, this is simply the government protecting its citizens. In fact, it is simply applying the same limitations, without bias or preferential treatment,

that we would demand if the religious liberty in question was that of human sacrifice. Both limitations and infringements are necessary when the well-being of others is at stake. "Harm to others" is where the line must be drawn.

It is within the government's rights to prevent people from harming one another, and because of that, vaccine mandates are not an evil infringement on religious liberty. Sure, you may think vaccines are not effective, and you may even think that vaccines are not safe, but those issues are separate from the idea that vaccine mandates are an evil infringement on religious liberties. As mentioned earlier, governments rely upon scientists for data that demonstrates safety and efficacy for various things. Furthermore, even if it turned out that there was a mistake in the scientific finding, it wouldn't change the fact that the government made decisions based on the best information that was available to them at the present time. Far from being "evil," I would say this is simply individuals in the government performing their responsibilities to the best of their knowledge and abilities. If we choose to approach this issue honestly, we can see that vaccine mandates are actually in line with the ethical limits of religious liberty. We will also see that the government has the right and responsibility to inhibit actions that cause harm to another person, even if that action is based on a religious belief.