

Democratic Governors Suddenly Lift Mask Restrictions, Fail to Admit Science



Yesterday, a number of important Democratic governors lifted mask mandates in their states. Almost to a one, they cited the changes wrought by the fast-moving and relatively mild omicron variant of the SARS-CV2 virus as the prime reason for the change.

What none of them did was admit what “the Science” has shown for at least two decades, and has been clear through the last two years to anyone doing a modicum of independent research on the subject: masks have never been shown to fundamentally alter the spread of respiratory viruses within the general population.

What they *did* say almost to a one, like their counterparts in Great Britain, Denmark and other countries now dismantling previous Covid restrictions, was that the return to normality was greatly facilitated by the uptake of vaccines in the populations they currently govern.

Nearly a half century ago, a man named Ron Ziegler held the position now occupied by Jen Psaki. Like all presidential spokespeople before and since he was a serial dissembler.

But back then there were still a few journalists at the presidential court and beyond willing to do their jobs. And when one day in the midst of the Watergate scandal he used the passive voice construction “mistakes were made” in an attempt to explain away obvious breaches of honesty and ethics committed quite *actively* by the Nixon Administration, he was roundly mocked by the press corps.

Sadly, however, as [I have argued elsewhere](#), this type of non-apology apology, which caused a scandal then, has become ubiquitous across our social landscape. And that’s a shame.

Why?

Because real apologies and expressions of accountability are important. Without them, neither the apologizer nor the aggrieved party ever experiences what the ancient Greeks considered a cardinal element in human development and human relations: catharsis.

This is especially so in the case of government entities. Without admissions of guilt, the assumptions and premises undergirding failed policies remain intact, lying fallow until such time as the government entity in question feels it opportune to deploy them again in the service of another misguided crusade.

This is what is currently occurring with the Covid hawks who have violated our fundamental rights time and again over the last two years.

These enemies of human dignity and freedom now realize that many of their former supporters among the citizenry feel exhausted, and in many cases, flat out deceived.

At the same time, however, they do not want to permanently relinquish the powerful repressive tools they have acquired during the two-year state of exception.

The answer?

One part of it, already mentioned, is the moderated limited hangout operation now being conducted regarding the use of masks in public. By relaxing these strictures while in no way addressing the fundamental fallacies upon which the masking policies were based, they ensure that mask mandates can be brought back when and if they deem it necessary to do so.

The second part, which is far more pernicious and consequential, is the effort to push a proposition that is at best quite tenuous in light of what actual scientific studies are currently revealing about vaccine efficacy: that without widespread injection uptake the virus would have never receded, and we would have thus never have gotten into a position to recover our freedoms.

Note the underlying logic here. We are not getting our freedoms back because they intrinsically belong to us and were unjustly stolen. We are getting them back because an important plurality of us have done what the “experts” and the “authorities” coerced us into doing.

With this approach there is no catharsis or healing, and certainly no acquisition of new wisdom and knowledge. What there is, is a sly reification of the infantilizing and anti-democratic ways of thinking that have predominated in our policy-making class throughout the pandemic.

Though many people, laboring under the mortal fear of being branded with the weaponized term of “conspiracy theorist,” are reluctant to admit it, the central concern of policy-makers throughout the pandemic has not been the health of our communities, but rather gaining enhanced control over where we go and what we put into our bodies.

There is nothing more central to the idea and practice of freedom than bodily autonomy. It is the basal freedom from which all others are derived. Without it—as the history of slavery starkly reminds us—all other liberties are comparatively ornamental.

For this reason, we must vigorously oppose this organized attempt to present the vaccines, which have been delivered to millions under rather severe coercion, as a great, if not the greatest, hero of the pandemic film.