



The Daily Free Press

The Independent Student Newspaper at Boston University

 MENU



CITY, NEWS

Protesters gather to oppose mandatory statewide immunization

February 5, 2020 12:53 am

by Angela Yang



Anti-mandatory vaccination advocates protest in front of the Massachusetts State House Tuesday. LAURYN ALLEN/ DAILY FREE PRESS STAFF

“My body, my choice.”

A familiar chant to anyone who has witnessed an abortion rights debate, the phrase undertook a new meaning when anti-mandatory vaccination protesters gathered Tuesday morning before the Massachusetts State House.

The demonstration, organized by a group of mothers who call themselves the Massachusetts Freedom Coalition, opposes state legislation — a joint petition and a separate House bill — that together would schedule mandatory vaccinations for all children going to school, save for medical exemptions.

One of the acts, sponsored by Rep. Andres Vargas of the Third Essex District, would eliminate religious exemption as an option in Massachusetts. Vargas said in a phone interview he was inspired to take on the issue after his constituents expressed concern about the resurgence of measles in the U.S. in recent years.

After then speaking with scientists and medical experts, Vargas said he found data showing a 500 percent increase in the use of religious exemptions to vaccinations since the 1980s.

“I don’t know about you, but I don’t think there’s been a 500 percent increase in religious affiliation since the 1980s,” Vargas said. “So, that goes to show that the spirit of the law is really being violated.”

One protester at the event said this is indeed a loophole households look to take advantage of. 54-year-old Erich Kress from Livingston, New York said after the requisites for medical exemptions in his state became “so extreme that it was nearly impossible,” he began to claim religious exemption.

“A lot of people who didn’t even have strong religious beliefs,” Kress said, “had to resort to the religious exemption in order not to vaccinate their child.”

Kress said he decided to attend the protest in Boston — which totaled several dozen people — because New York had recently removed its religious exemption option and he does not want to see the same occur in Massachusetts.

“My children have never been vaccinated,” Kress said, sitting between two preteen daughters. “And we’re not afraid to have the measles. In fact, my kids had the measles.”

Measles, Kress said, make individuals “more strong and healthy.” He said he thinks children are brainwashed in school to believe in the efficacy of vaccines, which is why he chooses now to homeschool his.

Massachusetts Freedom Coalition member Samantha Medeiros, 31, of Lakeville stood atop the stairs to the State House holding one end of a banner that read, “Medical freedom is the new Civil Rights Movement.”

“My own son had several reactions to several vaccines and his body just seems to be hypersensitive to them,” Medeiros said.

“And I, through the community, have heard many stories.”

Vandana Madhavan, clinical director for Pediatric Infectious Disease at Massachusetts General Hospital for Children, said in a phone interview some vaccines contain a “very small” amount of virus to generate an appropriate immune response.

“The minor fever or rash someone would get from the MMR vaccine or the varicella vaccine is not the same as getting the actual disease itself,” Madhavan said. “Vaccines do not cause the illnesses that they protect against.”

Protestor Amelia Coburn, 35, of Southbridge is also a member of the Massachusetts Freedom Coalition. Restraining a one-year-old son scrambling around at her feet, Coburn said she has been “lucky” not to have experienced any negative consequences from her own family’s vaccines, but has heard contradictory accounts from others she knows.

“I have had friends who have had babies who have died immediately after vaccines,” Coburn said. “I have friends whose babies are now in and out of the hospital with really severe problems, and I do think it’s linked to vaccines.”

Madhavan said a common misconception is that falling sick after getting vaccinated means the vaccine did not work when, in fact, the victim coincidentally contracted a different illness.

“The anecdotal evidence of someone falling sick after a vaccine,” Madhavan said, “has never proven that the vaccines themselves cause issues.”

62-year-old Johanna Keefe of Back Bay, who attended the protest in support, said she is concerned that vaccines inject harmful toxins into the body.

“One of the most dangerous [toxins] is aluminum,” Keefe said. “That’s just one adjuvant that is meant to agitate the immune system to make these things work.”

Adjuvants, according to Madhavan, are vaccine components that trigger the immune system to respond more robustly. Chemicals viewed as foreign when used as adjuvants, Madhavan said, are oftentimes already present in children from different sources within their environment.

“Yes, aluminum is in some vaccines,” Madhavan said. “But a breastfeeding infant receives more aluminum through breast milk from the mom than they do from doses of vaccines.”

Keefe said she also believes children must undergo certain diseases — those nearly eradicated by vaccines today — to “prime themselves” for a strong immune system in later life.

“Certain diseases should run their course naturally,” Keefe said. “You know, things like the measles and the chickenpox.”

Aside from Tuesday’s protest, Vargas said he has received an overall positive public reaction to his bill. Some, he said, are surprised Massachusetts hasn’t already ruled out religious exemptions.

“We’ve also heard from anti-vaxxers who have contacted me saying things like they wish ill on my future kids, messaging my wife on social media,” Vargas said. “But I got into public service to make a difference. And sometimes when you want to make a difference, you got to take the hits.”

UPDATE: A previous version of this article used the term “anti-vaccination,” which has been changed to read “anti-mandatory vaccination” to differentiate the movements.



Author: Angela Yang

15 Comments



Ricky Slade

February 5, 2020 at 8:18 am

Erich Kress could not be more wrong. The religious exemption was never a loophole, and to say such a thing in and of itself is religious discrimination. Thank you for your advocacy but comments like that do much more harm than good. It’s a decision based on one’s sincere religious beliefs and moral conscience, absolutely nothing to do w a loophole.



Our Child Our Choice

February 5, 2020 at 12:17 pm

I was there. I am an actual religious mother. I am Messianic and to be honest, I have never met a Messianic person who is for vaccinations. With aborted fetal cells , formaldehyde, e.coli, Pig DNA, monkey DNA ... just to name a few .

Why weren’t the 15 actual religious people questioned for this interview?

I’m assuming it was because an agenda is trying to be pushed here. Not surprised.

Also, most religious people don’t even know they have religious exemptions, available to them. So perhaps, the spike of

religious exemptions being requested has to do with the fact that our religious rights are being persecuted.

In any case, non religious people should not have to hide behind a false statement of religious exemptions. they should be able to obtain A philosophical exemption. They should be free to say I don't want toxins in my body. It's their body. Is their choice. It's their children, it's their choice.

What's next? Are we going to be forced to get a flu shot in order to renew your drivers license? That's what they tried to push in New Jersey.

This whole idea, of being forced to have medication, without consent is unconstitutional.

Where there is risk, there must be a choice. I am sick and tired of this tyrannical agenda that all children must be vaccinated. We do not live in Soviet Russia. I refuse.

If the Constitution is broken, we will break the government, legally! Get ready!



your choice hurts everyone around you

February 5, 2020 at 5:31 pm

<https://www.cdc.gov/measles/cases-outbreaks.html>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Measles>

Everyone has rights but your points are invalidated by the public health concerns they cause.

The idea this is on the same level of other civil rights is a joke. Being a different race doesnt cause harm to anyone around you. Being gay doesnt harm anyone around you. Not vaccinating people harms others around you. It is very easy to understand.

You're not going to break shit, data and science can be proven – religion cannot. What you “feel” is not proof of anything and guess what Brenda no one gives a shit what you feel, data matters not your precious feelings.



Liv

February 7, 2020 at 9:21 am

How could people be in danger if they're vaccinated? Think about it. You vaccinate because you want protection- so you're no longer in “danger”. What other people do is none of your business and it's their constitutional right to turn down a vaccine based on religious beliefs- which need not be defined.



James Lyons-Weiler, PhD

February 5, 2020 at 5:49 pm

One you correct for body weight, infants receive far more aluminum from vaccines than breast milk, formula, or other food. Please see the Appendix and citations in this peer-reviewed research article –

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0946672X19305784>



Kyle Kenley Kopitke

February 5, 2020 at 6:02 pm

One of the reasons I am running for President of the United States, is to protect our Medical Freedoms and reform the vaccine process. If you think that injecting your little child with the DNA from pigs, cows, monkeys, mice and insects is good for them, please reconsider. 1 in 28 boys are now autistic; many, like my son were fine until their MMR vaccine; within an hour I personally watched as his brain was blasted into autism. A study by Rutgers states 1/4th of autistic children go undiagnosed. 1 in 2 children now have a Developmental Disability. And you wonder why your son wants to wear a dress to school at age 5? Well if you inject a male child with female aborted fetuses DNA, the XX chromosomes from the female, stunt the male's XO chromosomes, turning your son feminine. In order for me to be on the November ballot in MA, I need volunteers to collect signatures. If you care, do something. His Peace to you, Kyle Kenley Kopitke Kyle2020.com Kyle Kenley Kopitke on Facebook. Oh..... removing "exemptions" is only the first step towards forced mandated vaccines for all Americans of all ages — the full CDC schedule. If you want a horror nightmare look up NAIP (National Adult Immunization Program) now being rolled out.



DR

February 8, 2020 at 5:22 pm

Wow... just, wow. Literally zero of what you stated is scientifically or medically accurate. Not only is it inaccurate, it makes no sense biologically. Impressive.



Megan Glover

February 5, 2020 at 11:40 pm

I was at this protest. I am a religious mother of 4 living in Massachusetts. I do not vaccinate my family based on my religious convictions. I find it extremely offensive that just because folks claim religious exemptions falsely, that lawmakers feel they have ground for removing religious exemptions all together. That's like saying just because some people fraudulently use EBT cards, all EBT cards will be discontinued. Ridiculous.



Vaccinate your kids oh my god

February 6, 2020 at 7:06 pm

All of you who are against vaccinations should be ashamed that kids are dying of preventable diseases – all because you read an article by someone equally as thick as you, and now you think you're a more experienced and more qualified expert in medicine than the hundreds and thousands of people who develop vaccines.

How selfish do you have to be that you don't care about the affect your decision has on other people? We had almost eradicated measles, for goodness sake. Is it going to take a resurgence of smallpox for you idiots to get the picture??



Lisa Frances Chocie

February 6, 2020 at 8:50 pm

I and my sons are Vaccine Injured.

My oldest son, it was horrible seeing his reactions and not really understanding the reason. But, sadly..It was not until my previous Service Dog had died from her own Vaccines Injuries that I really put the puzzle all together. I had begun researching things when I'd got her, yes. Sadly, even after trying several Detox Treatments, her VI's were just too severe and she died of Gran Mal Seizures :[

Our bodies do NOT belong to the government and the government should never and does NOT have any right to force any medical thing on the people. Mandatory anything is against the Constitution and US Bill of Rights.



Lena Teeter. The Big Bang Theory?

February 7, 2020 at 5:51 am

The Big Bang Theory. According to science, we were all made from a single atom, millions of years ago. However did we survive this long without vaccinations? Somehow, in the last 60 years, our immune systems have become so dependent upon synthetic viruses just so we can live.

I find this hard to believe as statistics agree, we are sicker than we have ever been in recent history. So how can it be that vaccinations are making us healthier? It is very common that Children who are fully vaccinated are on multiple daily medications, in the United States. Where's the proof that we are doing better? Scholastically, no. Demographic Lee, no. Health-wise, no. Wasn't it our government and scientist that first made these diseases and viruses to begin with?

Maybe, just maybe this is another lie put out to fear us into buying into are governments tyrannical lies.

Remember that the 1986 act was approved by President Ronald Reagan That vaccine manufacturers would no longer be liable if injury happened due to vaccinations. So perhaps, this is the reason religious exemptions increased during the 1980s. The people were no longer protected and they didn't know it was unconstitutional. Make vaccine manufacturers liable again and see how the ingredients will change.

My body, is fearfully and wonderfully made, knitted together in my mother's womb by the almighty God, Yahweh. I do not need borne viruses to live. Here I am, alive and well.

In my opinion, the push for vaccinations and brainwashing of the masses has more to do with money than it has to do with health. If children are gradually becoming sicker and the medical industry gets to regen in on more cash flow, for the medications they used, to ssustain what they have damaged, in our natural immune system, this seems a lot more probable... Doesn't it?

Just like Adolf Hitler, telling German Along with whoever would listen, that Jews needed to be exterminated. So our current government is implying that unvaccinated children be done away with Anna forced to put diseases in their bodies. How absurd.

History actually shows how our government has infected thousands of black men with syphilis via injection. It is also speculated that homosexual men were targeted and injected with the AIDS virus, To discriminate against people's free will. The AIDS epidemic went on a decline when the government realized they were actually hurting the wives of these secretly homosexual men, along with her children.

Now, as a religious person to see history repeating, in a slightly different path but with this same message behind it, it is frightening to say the least. What about my Jewish people being murder? Had they not been forced into the gas chambers and killed? Where their bodies not stacked up Miles high because an EVIL agenda was trying to be pushed and their voices we're not heard?

Well, my voice will be heard. I unvaccinated children do not have diseases. They cannot spread what they do not have. Just

like a person can't give somebody AIDS if they don't have the disease. This makes no logical sense and it is a disgusting lie.

For those who are reading this, you need to choose a side. Choose to be on the right side of History because this is very wrong, don't let history repeat itself into more evil and discrimination.

To conclude my statements; what do unvaccinated families have to gain or those who are EX vaccinators have to gain? We Have No Agenda, we have no reason to lie and say children have been harmed or died due to vaccinations. They're not getting paid to tell people, not to vaccinate their children. They/we are volunteering our knowledge because nobody cares for the children. They want to treat them like prisoners and sit them in a school for 8 hours a day never learning to think for themselves. (Public schools have been compared to the prison system.) keeping them sick and on medicine that never heals, that just makes them sick. This ideology seems very deranged and evil to keep innocent children sick, for gain. No!



Forced Vaccinations should be illegal

February 7, 2020 at 9:29 am

I believe that vaccines cause more harm than good. Kids are being injured and killed. There is a reason we have VAERS: <https://vaers.hhs.gov/about.html>

We should not be forced to inject a product into our kids made by companies that cannot be held liable. Vaccine manufacturers have immunity from lawsuits. Look it up. Would you drive a car made by a company that you could not legally hold accountable for?



Karina

February 14, 2020 at 8:45 pm

They are technically UNCONSTITUTIONAL! The fact that we're even discussing removal of #religiousexemption, a clear violation of freedom of religion protected by the Constitution, shows that

1) Our elected officials think they can get away with violating Constitution

OR

2) Our elected officials don't understand that they're violating the Constitution, the one they swore on the bible to uphold when took public office?

Either way, not the state of affairs any sober, sane resident of the state of #Massachusetts should tolerate.



DR

February 8, 2020 at 4:22 pm

Wow... just, wow. Literally zero of what you stated is scientifically or medically accurate. Not only is it inaccurate, it makes no sense biologically. Impressive.



Peter Hammond

February 19, 2020 at 9:14 am

Can people please stop and think about how insane mandatory injections by for-profit corporations are?

Please at least take the time to read the court cases against all the top 5 vaccine manufacturers...ALL of whom have plead guilty to fraud in the last decade.

These aren't small fraud cases either, they are some of the largest settlements in our judicial history.

Please research the rise in autoimmune disorders and their links to vaccines. Then look at what the most profitable new sector in medicine is.

Please understand the fact that these vaccine manufacturers spend twice as much on sales and marketing on average than they do on research and development. You know what the worst part about advertising is? It works. The scariest part is they spend billions in direct ads to consumers, but they spend 8 times as much marketing to doctors, and medical boards.

People, you are being convinced that measles, which has not killed anyone in the US since 2003 is an imminent threat, and that pharmaceutical companies, which have killed close to one million people in that time, are the ones who can solve the problem.

Come on! Wake the hell up!

This is literally the scariest piece of legislation I have ever seen introduced.

What would you like to see The Daily Free Press cover? Let us know on our [tip line](#).

LATEST OPINION