



# Dr. Steve's Field of Vision

## **In Defense of Freedom**

When the State of Illinois was considering passing a mandatory seat belt law, I argued against the law and for FREEDOM.

I own a car. I am a driver. I know that in the neighborhood of 1.3 million people die world wide as a result of road traffic crashes in any given year. I personally think that getting into a car and NOT fastening your seatbelt is like playing a game of Russian roulette. I always wear my seatbelt, but I believe you have the right to decide if you will wear one. In July of 1985, Illinois began enforcing a mandatory seatbelt law and FREEDOM suffered.

I don't like deaths and injuries from car crashes—but I cherish FREEDOM!

When the State of Illinois was debating passing laws prohibiting smoking in public places, I argued against the law and for FREEDOM.

Tobacco is a legal product and smokers have rights equal to those that don't smoke. It is an infringement on the rights of entrepreneurs to require that their places of business (restaurants/bars/retail stores, etcetera) prohibit the smoking of tobacco products. Let business owners decide for themselves if they want to prohibit smoking in their establishments. Let patrons decide what businesses they want to frequent. If the public doesn't want smoking in public places like restaurants and bars, those places that allow smoking will not succeed—or they might succeed. Let FREEDOM decide.

I am not a smoker. I don't like the smell of tobacco smoke. I don't like tobacco smoke permeating my clothes and hair. As a health care professional I don't like the disease and death that result from smoking. In January of 2008, the Smoke-Free Illinois Act went into effect and FREEDOM suffered.

I don't like smoking—but I cherish FREEDOM!

I could go on and on. Mandatory helmet laws for cyclists and motorcyclists, restrictions on the size of sodas/sweet sugary drinks that may be sold or purchased, requiring the purchase of a product against a person's will (auto insurance, health insurance, etcetera) . . . the list seems endless. Each time a law passes like those described above, FREEDOM suffers.

I cherish FREEDOM!

When the Corona Virus Pandemic arrived on the shores of the United States, FREEDOM once again was placed at risk. "Fourteen days to flatten the curve" asked citizens to close their businesses, stay indoors, avoid public places and other infringements in order to stem the tide of this deadly disease.

I complied. I closed my practice for two weeks. When I did reopen, I complied with requirements to limit the number of patients in my office. I purchased air purifiers to circulate and clean the air of potential deadly COVID-19 particles floating in the air. I moved my equipment around creating space so that patients could maintain "social distance" while receiving treatment. My employees and I meticulously cleaned all surfaces after patients were treated. Pens were placed in receptacles indicating if they were "clean" or "used" to limit the spread of the disease. I, and my employees "masked up", and I required all patients entering my office to do so, as well.

We have endured these measures for months and months now. This, it seems, is the "new normal", and many have grown to accept and even embrace some of these new practices.

Now, however, we face a new infringement on our FREEDOM. The Governor of the State of Illinois, by Executive Order, has mandated that all healthcare workers must be vaccinated against COVID-19 or submit to weekly testing to prove that one is not infected. Employers are required to keep detailed records of their employees' vaccine status and/or testing status. The penalty for noncompliance is threatened action against one's license to practice.

The U.S. President has also mandated, by Executive Order and rules forthcoming from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), that all healthcare workers and all employees of businesses with 100 or more employees must be vaccinated against COVID-19, or submit to weekly testing for the virus. Once again, employers will be required to maintain proper documentation regarding their employees' vaccine or testing status. The potential penalty is threatened that one will be prohibited from treating or receiving reimbursement for treatment under government programs such as Medicare or Medicaid.

These mandates totally ignore the fact that many whom these rules cover may have natural immunity—a form of immunity that has been shown to be thirteen times more effective than vaccine-mediated immunity by a recent (September 2021) study from the country of Israel.

Additionally, vaccine hesitancy is a legitimate concern. Numerous respected scientists and researchers have expressed apprehension about the new technology employed to deliver vaccine-mediated immunity against COVID-19. The data from the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) maintained by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) demonstrates a troubling increase in deaths and other adverse events that may be directly related to these vaccines. The calls for caution are ignored with un-elected bureaucrats and elected officials alike continually telling us that these vaccines are "safe and effective", even as the efficacy data shows waning protection, and we have no long-term data regarding the safety of these new technologies that have never before been used on humans.

I am not an “anti-vaxer.” I have repeatedly encouraged those at high risk for poor outcomes from a COVID-19 infection to take the jab. This has included many of my patients, my eighty-four year old mother, other family members in high-risk categories such as those that are obese and those with diabetes and/or hypertension—“Get in line and get your vaccine,” I have advised. However, with the concerns expressed above, a one size fits all approach does not seem prudent.

I am not anti-vaccine—but I cherish FREEDOM!

Setting safety concerns aside, these mandates compel an employer to violate their employees’ rights to privacy by *requiring* that employers collect and divulge legally protected private health information to government agencies. Of course, an employer would also have his/her rights infringed upon in this regard, as an employer would be subject to providing the same information about themselves to these regulating bodies.

When did the Executive branches of the state and federal governments morph into the Legislative branches? When did Executive Orders suddenly have the force of law? When did the general public become helpless children without the ability to make decisions for themselves requiring the protection of “Big Brother”?

American author William Faulkner stated, “*We must be free not because we claim freedom, but because we practice it.*”

For me, FREEDOM has suffered enough and it is time to practice it.

I shall not comply with these new mandates. I shall not violate my rights or the rights of my employees by submitting to the illegal requirement to divulge legally protected private health information to the State or Federal government.

These new mandates are a bridge too far.

Our country was founded on the use of civil disobedience to protest and overcome the tyranny of government. Our FREEDOM has suffered enough. It is time to board the ships of civil disobedience and throw the tea of these illegal mandates into the harbor.

I cherish FREEDOM!

Dr. Steve Troyanovich

Chiropractic Physician

Clinician Researcher

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