

# FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

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September 29, 2021

**SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL**

The Honorable Satya Rhodes-Conway  
Mayor of Madison  
City-County Bldg., Rm. 403  
210 Martin Luther King Jr Blvd  
Madison, WI 53703

Mr. Joe Parisi  
Dane County Executive  
City-County Building, Rm. 421  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

Members of the Madison Common  
Council  
*via council@cityofmadison.com*

Members of the Dane County Board of  
Supervisors  
*Via county\_board\_recipients  
@countyofdane.com*

Dr. Jerry Halverson  
Chair, Madison & Dane County Board  
of Health  
City-County Building, Rm. 507  
210 Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
Madison, WI 53703

Members of Madison & Dane County  
Board of Health  
*via health@publichealthmdc.com*

Re: Renewed call for “green cards” to require proof of vaccination in Madison/Dane  
County

Dear Mayor, Members of the Common Council, Dane County Executive and Board  
of Supervisors and Public Health Madison & Dane County:

We are writing to renew our call of August 13, 2021,<sup>1</sup> to urge you to take steps to  
adopt incentives for vaccinations here in Madison and Dane County. Since we last

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<sup>1</sup> <https://ffrf.org/uploads/legal/MadisonandDaneCountyvaccinemandates.pdf>

wrote, the full vaccination rate in Dane County has only increased by two or three percentage points. With strong leadership and evidence-based approaches, we in Dane County could be doing even better in defeating the spread of Covid-19. We are sure you share our dismay in seeing Dane County remain on the CDC's "high" rating for Covid spread, and going from being among the most fully vaccinated counties in the nation in early summer to being surpassed by many counties, such as Marin County, Calif. (87 percent), San Francisco (80 percent), San Mateo (82 percent), Santa Clara (85.8 percent), New York City (82 percent) and New Orleans (80 percent).

The difference between Dane County and these cities or counties is the wise decision by those other local governmental bodies to require proof of fully vaccinated status to engage in indoor dining, bars, nightclubs, gyms, theaters and other such events.

We recently returned from a two-week stay, largely in Italy, the first country to require fully vaccinated status in order to enjoy public places of accommodation. Italy requires citizens to produce a "Green Pass" (with the CDC vaccination status card accepted for American visitors). Roughly 77 percent of Italians are fully vaccinated as a result, compared to the United States' 56 percent, despite Italy's earlier problems with vaccine availability. We had to provide such proof when checking into hotels, being seated inside restaurants or going into museums and even open-air venues such as the Colosseum. When we arrived in Geneva, Switzerland, where citizens are required to procure full-vaccination certificates/QR codes, we encountered even more forceful requirements with strong policing, fines and penalties for places of accommodation that were not checking vaccination status. Even short-term visitors such as ourselves, who were not staying long enough to procure the Covid certificate, were required to undergo rapid testing before we could eat indoors, or take part in other indoor activities. In reality, we were even asked to produce proof of testing before being seated *outdoors*, before purchasing tickets to ride an outdoor sightseeing trolley and to take a boat cruise. Such proof was required on trains throughout Italy, Switzerland and France. In France, our CDC card sufficed as a Covid-19 pass when we were "carded." We cheered these regulations.

Begging, bribing and (sadly) reasoning with vaccine-hesitant individuals has not done the job. Governmental policies must therefore step in so science and reason will prevail. We are fortunate indeed that science works, that science and the tax dollars invested in the vaccines, and the round-the-clock work of heroic researchers

and clinicians, have produced multiple vaccines which could, if fully utilized, spare lives and health on a global scale and put an end to this pandemic. Until we reach herd immunity here and worldwide, we face ever-more mutating strains that may ultimately weaken or render ineffectual these magnificent vaccines. We must all do our part. **Public officials and leaders must to do everything within your power to hasten herd immunity in Dane County.**

Finally, the other efficacious policy we encountered in Italy and Switzerland was easy, pervasive rapid testing. It was available at Rome's train station. The pharmacy across the street from our Geneva hotel allowed us to get our negative Covid test within 40 minutes so that we could then enter restaurants and shops. Anything you as local government officials can do to lobby for or set up widespread rapid testing sites, including in our public schools, will go hand-in-hand with vaccination mandates to stop the spread. We urge you to emulate these effective policies by setting up a Madison/Dane County "green pass" immediately.

Very truly,

Annie Laurie Gaylor & Dan Barker  
Co-Presidents  
Freedom From Religion Foundation