

FREEDOM FROM RELIGION *foundation*

P.O. BOX 750 › MADISON, WI 53701 › (608) 256-8900 › WWW.FFRF.ORG

August 13, 2021

SENT VIA EMAIL AND U.S. MAIL

The Honorable Satya Rhodes-Conway
Mayor
City County Building, 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

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

Re: Adopt proactive vaccine requirements immediately

Dear Mayor and Members of Public Health Madison & Dane County:

We are writing on behalf of the Freedom From Religion Foundation, which is based here in Madison, Wis., and our local membership, to urge you to take proactive steps, following the lead of the City of San Francisco,¹ to immediately adopt restrictions on unvaccinated residents. You may be aware that San Francisco now bars unvaccinated people from indoor dining, bars, nightclubs, gyms, large concerts, theatres and other indoor events (San Francisco is showing leniency by giving employees of affected businesses until Oct. 13 to prove full vaccination, thus protecting jobs).

San Francisco is ahead of the curve compared to Dane County. In San Francisco, 78 percent of the eligible population is fully vaccinated compared to our 68 percent,² but it is not resting on laurels to achieve true herd immunity and squelch the spread of the delta variant. Countries such as France and Italy have seen dramatic increases in vaccinations

¹ Covid-19 Vaccination Policy 8/6/2021

sfdhr.org/sites/default/files/documents/COVID-19/COVID-19-Vaccination-Policy.pdf.

² Public Health Madison & Dane County, publichealthmdc.com/coronavirus/dashboard.

against Covid-19 by requiring dining patrons to be fully vaccinated. This is the way to go. San Francisco's rule is landmark in that it doesn't dance around the issue by exempting unvaccinated individuals if they show a negative Covid-19 test. Individuals can still be exposed and contract Covid-19 between tests. This rule has muscle.

It is imperative that Madison and Dane County likewise demonstrate leadership to protect public health by adopting these commonsense mandates.

We are about to experience an influx of tens of thousands of students to the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. The CDC has indicated that vaccination coverage and intent among adults is lowest among those ages 18–39 years.³

As you know, Wis. State Senator Steve Nass is commandeering and micromanaging the Covid-19 mitigation efforts of the University of Wisconsin System, including UW-Madison, even objecting to UW's masking requirements. The Rules Committee he chairs has an anti-science agenda. But the university does not exist in a vacuum. We remember all too well what happened a year ago when UW-Madison re-opened, leading to a dramatic pandemic surge. Dane County is already at a high level of transmission.

Your leadership will fill the void created by Sen. Nass and the UW System and protect residents from the undoubted surges, contagions, hospitalizations, deaths and possible shutdowns affecting us all that will invariably attend such surges. If you impose a full vaccination order for indoor dining, bars, etc., this will prompt the desired results from the student population and other eligible residents who have failed to vaccinate against Covid-19.

Begging, bribing and, sadly, reasoning with vaccine-hesitant individuals has not done the job. You have it within your authority to make Dane County No. 1 again in full vaccinations, to quell the surge and ensure that reason and science prevail.

We urge you not to delay in taking this much-needed step.

Yours truly,



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

³ CDC COVID-19 Vaccination Coverage and Intent Among Adults Aged 18–39 Years
www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/70/wr/mm7025e2.htm.