

# Far-right protesters temporarily shut down COVID-19 vaccinations at Dodger Stadium in Los Angeles

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On January 30, the mass COVID-19 vaccination site at Los Angeles's Dodger Stadium, one of the largest in the United States, was shut down for about an hour by about 50 demonstrators who blocked the entrance.

The group organizing the protest, Shop Mask Free Los Angeles, designated the event a "Scamdemic Protest/March" directed "against everything COVID, Vaccine, PCR Tests, Lockdowns, Masks, Fauci, Gates, Newsom, China, digital tracking, etc."

Participants were advised to "please refrain from wearing Trump/MAGA attire as we want our statement to resonate with the sheeple. No flags but informational signs only." Signs included "END THE LOCKDOWN," "COVID=SCAM," "TAKE OFF YOUR MASK," and "DON'T BE A LAB RAT."

As people sat in their vehicles waiting to be vaccinated, protesters shouted at them to turn around and tossed leaflets into open windows. Virtually none of the protesters wore a mask, even though the City of Los Angeles has ordered that all people outside of their homes must wear them.

Shortly before 2:00 p.m., the Los Angeles Fire Department, which manages the vaccination site, announced that the demonstration was forcing their closure of the entrance to the stadium. Several Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD) officers responded, but no arrests were made.

Although both the LAPD and Chief Michel Moore tweeted that the vaccination site was never closed, the facts are otherwise. When a person waiting in line approached officers standing in front of the closed gate and asked who was in charge, an LAPD officer was recorded stating, "I'm in charge, so right now, it is going to stay closed until I get further information."

Dating back at least to the Watts riots almost 60 years ago and continuing through the George Floyd-inspired antipolice violence demonstrations last summer, the LAPD has garnered an international reputation for repression of free speech and brutality. Using pretexts such as "blocking traffic," LAPD officers typically fire "less-lethal" projectiles and tear gas canisters before moving in with batons and flexicuffs to mass arrest left-wing protesters.

In this instance, however, the far-right demonstrators were allowed to disrupt a major public health operation by impeding the flow of traffic into the vaccination site while LAPD officers stood by and watched. Once the gates were reopened around 3:00 p.m. and protesters began to leave, one of the organizers thanked LAPD officers, who waved back.

This demonstration was not unexpected. It was promoted publicly on social media for several days. The LAPD was not caught off guard. They deliberately chose not to act.

It is no coincidence that past anti-lockdown protests across the country and former President Donald Trump's attempted coup d'état on January 6 have been met with muted responses from law enforcement officers, some of whom have openly encouraged, supported or even participated in the fascist demonstrations.

The reactionary effort to stop vaccinations was immensely hypocritical, as demonstrators claimed to be defending personal liberty against government overreach. Yet they were preventing people from voluntarily getting COVID-19 vaccines that reduce the risk of hospitalization and death from a virus, which has already killed more than 2.2 million people around

the world.

California is currently a global epicenter of the coronavirus pandemic with more than 3.3 million confirmed cases. The virus has spread rapidly in the state's large and densely populated centers, which includes millions of low-income workers and families crammed into outrageously expensive living spaces, with deadly consequences. As of Sunday almost 41,000 Californians—more than one out of every 1,000 residents—have died from complications of COVID-19.

The day of the demonstration the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health recorded more than 6,900 new cases along with another 316 fatalities, bringing the official total to 16,647.



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