

Stop the lifting of pandemic restrictions and the promotion of vaccine nationalism!

Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee

16 July 2021

The Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee condemns the lifting of public health measures to combat the COVID-19 pandemic, which in the US has been orchestrated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Biden administration. We demand the implementation of a massive global vaccination program for every person on the planet and that all necessary public health measures be restored and expanded until the pandemic is ended.

This crisis is far from over, and is in fact entering a new deadly stage. Billions of people, the vast majority of the global population, remain unvaccinated and governments have no plans to coordinate this on a global scale. Unless steps are immediately taken to vaccinate the world's population and public health measures restored, millions more will die needlessly.

The Delta variant, the same one which caused the catastrophic spike in deaths in India just weeks ago, is quickly becoming the dominant strain in the United States and around the world.

Global cases are already beginning to rise, with several countries seeing rapid rises in cases and deaths due to the Delta variant.

? In Russia, cases have risen to over 25,000 per day, a 136 percent increase in the past month. Deaths have also exploded to nearly 800 per day, bringing the Russian health care system to its knees.

? Indonesia has seen daily cases skyrocket from 6,000 in May to over 50,000 in mid July, with daily deaths increasing five times to over 1,000.

? In Britain, daily cases have grown exponentially over the past six weeks, reaching 48,000 on July 15, an increase of 500 percent over the past 30 days.

? Similar patterns are occurring in South Africa, Bangladesh, Colombia and Argentina.

It is necessary to understand that the pandemic is not merely a public health crisis but is above all a social crisis. Governments around the world—Democrats or Republicans; Liberals or Conservatives—are lifting restrictions, public health measures and reopening schools in order to drive people back to work and boost the generation of profits for the wealthy.

The United Kingdom has announced that it will complete its reopening plans in the next two weeks. Exemplifying the policy of normalizing mass death in the UK, the new UK Health Secretary Sajid Javid said that the UK must "learn to live" with the virus, and that the full reopening of businesses would be "irreversible."

This same homicidal policy is being implemented in the US by Republicans and Democrats alike. The Biden administration has cleared the way for every state to lift mask mandates and all restrictions on fully reopening schools and businesses.

Such decisions will have disastrous effects. Only 54 percent of the total US population has received at least one shot, with children under the age of 12 still not eligible to be vaccinated. Globally, under one-quarter of all people are vaccinated, meaning that there is more than enough room here and abroad for the virus to infect and mutate.

Not only is the world still under-vaccinated, but tens of millions are actively being denied the vaccine. The US is blocking the distribution of vaccines to Venezuela and Cuba to advance its own imperialist interests in the region, while Israel, in a move akin to apartheid-style discrimination, continues to deny vaccine access to the Palestinian people.

While 8,000 people every day are dying from the coronavirus, profiteering of big pharmaceuticals continues. These merchants of death, backed by the

Biden administration, continue to deny other global manufacturers their “intellectual property” needed to produce the vaccines.

Companies like Pfizer and Moderna have been given \$22 billion in federal aid, yet they hoard the methods for vaccine production from the world, protected by the capitalist politicians in the US government. Executives for Pfizer and Moderna made hundreds of millions of dollars selling stock shares after the announcement of their vaccines.

Only the working class can provide a progressive solution to this crisis. The working class is the only social force that is not tied to the profit or nation-state system.

Over the past year, workers have increasingly entered into struggle. In March 2020, workers took the lead in forcing the closure of schools and businesses. Over the past six months, a series of strikes have broken out in the US and globally as workers seek to recoup losses that have been imposed upon them. In each of these struggles, the leadership of the unions have sided with the corporations, just as the leaders of the National Education Association (NEA) and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have sided with the Biden administration in reopening schools.

The formation of the Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committees and other rank-and-file committees is an important step in organizing the working class independently of the corporatist unions and workers taking the lead in their struggles.

The Pennsylvania Educators Rank-and-File Safety Committee is committed to a fight to end the pandemic and calls upon fellow educators and workers to join in this struggle.

We stand for:

- **A mass global vaccination program.** Billions of doses of vaccine must be distributed to every country in the world, along with the necessary equipment and materials for distribution and production of the vaccine.

- **An end to patent protections and the blocking of vaccines and health supplies to any country.** The US government must not use the vaccine to bully other countries into accepting its dictates, and must waive the property rights of vaccine manufacturers in order to save millions of lives. Vaccine production must be promoted on a mass scale to ensure that all people may

become vaccinated.

- **An end to the lifting of public health measures.** Millions of lives are being put at risk by ending pandemic restrictions prematurely. It is necessary to save countless lives to reinstate these measures until the virus is brought under control and eradicated.

- **Schools must not reopen until all students can be vaccinated.** The great lie of the pandemic has been that young people are not susceptible to the virus. This has been proven false time and time again. More and more research points to the role that schools and children have played in transmitting the virus even when asymptomatic. In order to protect students, educators and our communities, schools must not return to in-person learning until children can be vaccinated and adequate ventilation can be provided.

We call upon all educators and other workers to take up this fight. To find out more, please contact us today.



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