

University students and health worker condemn censorship of zero-COVID advocate Dr David Berger

Our reporters
5 August 2022

The WSWS continues to receive statements supporting Dr David Berger, an Australian physician and dedicated zero-COVID advocate who is being threatened with deregistration by the Australian Health Practitioner Regulation Agency (AHPRA) over his social media condemnations of the government's "let it rip" coronavirus policies.

Since the publication of our first article on July 8, which calls on scientists, health workers and other sections of workers to come to Dr Berger's defence, the WSWS has published eighteen articles compiling statements of support, including from workers, students and professionals.

We urge workers, young people and professionals to speak out in defence of Dr Berger. Statements of support can be emailed here. Please indicate in the email how you would like to be identified in our next article, and if you want to include a photo, please attach one to the email.

Cindy, a health worker from Perth, Western Australia:

Dr Berger has been silenced by AHPRA because it works alongside the government and Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly to keep workers from knowing the truth about the pandemic. If parents knew the truth about the danger of COVID, they wouldn't be sending their children to school, and workers wouldn't be able to continue to make money for big businesses that are profiteering from the pandemic.

Twitter unsuccessfully attempted to close down the Socialist Equality Party for coming to the defence of Dr Berger, Julian Assange, Lisa Diaz and David O'Sullivan, who all fought for the truth. What the SEP has done is link these important cases together.

Why was Twitter so afraid of the @SEP_Australia campaign that it tried to censor those who fight against censorship?

The working class is coming forward to fight for its very existence, under conditions where the Socialist Equality Party and the *World Socialist Web Site* are fighting for the establishment of rank-and-file committees of health workers, educators, autoworkers, postal workers and other industries.

Under conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic all health workers need to look to the important advice Dr Berger has given us. We are being driven as if we are robots, not human beings, who must come back to work each day and face the pandemic's effects on our patients, as well as on ourselves. Dr Berger has helped us face this unending struggle.

What exactly is AHPRA for? It is not to help health workers.

Ashlee, a La Trobe University student in Melbourne:

The censorship and unjust punishment being placed on Dr David Berger is unsettling and worrisome to the utmost degree.

As a student in my twenties, it is worrisome to know that I cannot speak out on any policies that people of authority have made without fear of unjust consequences. It is telling the younger population that we do not have a voice, even though we are simply following our democratic right for freedom of speech.

The issue at play is not whether you agree or disagree with Dr. Berger's point of view. The issue is the fact the Dr Berger is being persecuted for voicing his opinion on the current coronavirus pandemic in the first place. If he believes that we should follow a zero-

COVID policy, then he has the right to voice his opinion. Dr Berger should not be punished for using his right to freedom of speech. Dr Berger's voice should be heard.

Charlie, a University of Newcastle aerospace engineering student:

I think what AHPRA is doing to Dr David Berger is disgusting. It is censorship and from what I can tell the reasons for this threat by AHPRA are illegitimate.

On the government's COVID response, our borders didn't get shut until New Zealand's did. Scott Morrison did absolutely nothing, and Albanese hasn't introduced any public health measures yet. The wage "increases" that Albanese brought in aren't keeping up with inflation. When I go shopping, prices are horrendous, especially of fruits and vegetables. It's getting really bad and trying to rent places is financially ridiculous; it's hard and unstable. I still live with my parents, for example, because I can't afford to move out.

On COVID, people need to go into isolation, they have to stay home for an illness that they have no control over. You should be properly compensated for being in isolation. I know people who have had to break COVID regulations to go back to work because they haven't been properly compensated and have rent to pay, bills to pay.

I work part-time in retail at Coles supermarkets. Regardless of whether we have COVID cases or not, we still have to keep the shop running. We had an outbreak of COVID among seven of our staff on the same day, but we still needed to keep the place running. We had people come in and sanitise the shop to pretend that nothing has gone wrong.

People have shown up to work with influenza and with COVID. Coles are inconsistent on whether they pay you or not. If you go off work sick and isolate with COVID it comes out of your annual leave, it doesn't come out of your sick pay.

When I worked through the first lockdown, we were supposed to get a \$250 bonus but not everyone got that. Over \$50 was taken out in tax for everyone and so you got less than \$200 additional for putting yourself in danger.

Dr Berger speaks out against the governments' responses—you shouldn't be able to take away people's democratic rights, people have a right to speak out.



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Socialist Equality Party visit:

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