

CORONAVIRUS

WAR ROOM

MEMORANDUM

TO: Interested Parties

FROM: Protect Our Care's Coronavirus War Room Director Nicole Haley

DATE: January 19, 2022

RE: Republicans Must Be Held Accountable for Prolonging the Pandemic

As we enter year three of life with COVID-19 in the United States, it is important that Republicans are held accountable for their politically-motivated, harmful actions which have prolonged the pandemic and significantly delayed America's return to normal. They would rather divide America to pander to the extreme elements of their base, than bring the country together to end this pandemic.

Republicans have spent the last two years fighting against science, opposing vaccines, and spreading disinformation, in order to push a political agenda. These actions have caused illness and death, often among their own constituents, and hurt our economy. And yet, even as they sow misinformation that causes vaccine hesitancy and promote theories and treatments that have been rejected by doctors and scientists, Republican governors are [turning around and asking for federal help](#) in dealing with the Omicron variant as it overwhelms hospitals in their states.

COVID-19 is hitting red parts of the country at [a much higher rate](#) than other parts, yet Republicans would rather attack and undermine the President's efforts, spread disinformation, and fight against vaccine and mask requirements than support common sense policies to protect Americans.

Republicans like Ron DeSantis, Greg Abbott, Glenn Youngkin, Ron Johnson and Rand Paul are responsible for prolonging a pandemic that still rages across the country, and they must be held accountable for the needless suffering caused by their baseless conspiracy theories and dangerous, anti-science policies.

Key Points:

1. **Republicans Are Paying People Not to Get Vaccinated:** [Republican governors and legislators](#) in Florida, Iowa, Kansas, Arkansas and Tennessee have changed their unemployment insurance rules to allow workers who are fired or quit over vaccine mandates to receive benefits. In Florida, Governor Ron DeSantis has offered [cash bonuses](#) to unvaccinated police officers who quit or are fired from police forces in other states. [CDC](#)

[data](#) shows that unvaccinated adults are nearly six times more likely to test positive for COVID-19 and 14 times more likely to die from the virus compared to vaccinated individuals.

- 2. Republicans Are Refusing to Promote Booster Shots:** Republican governors including Gov. DeSantis of Florida and Gov. Kevin Stitt of Oklahoma have been [scornful or silent](#) about booster shots that have been proven to provide [significant protection](#) against the Omicron variant. Asked whether he had received a booster shot, DeSantis demurred saying, “So, I’ve done whatever I did. The — the normal shot, and that at the end of the day is people’s individual decisions about what they want to do.” Oklahoma Governor Stitt announced that he has no plans to get boosted, telling a reporter, “I’m perfectly healthy.” Republicans on the House Judiciary Committee used their official Twitter account to spread false information, asking: “If the booster shots work, why don’t they work?” The tweet was later deleted. And even former president Trump was booed after telling a crowd that he got an additional dose of the vaccines he considers great achievements of his administration.

- 3. Republicans Are Filing Lawsuits Against Vaccine Mandates:** More than two dozen Republican attorneys general are waging war on vaccine and testing mandates on at least three fronts.
 - [At least 26 states](#) filed suit against OSHA’s rule that would have protected 84 million American workers with a vaccination or testing requirement. The [AMA](#) and other respected medical and public health experts warned that ending the OSHA rule would “severely and irreparably harm the public interest.”
 - [More than 20 Republican AGs](#) attempted to overturn CMS’s mandate that requires health care workers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. In the first year of the pandemic, [more than 3,500](#) health care workers in the US died and tens of thousands more were infected and sickened.
 - [Nearly two dozen Republican attorneys general](#) are working to block the administration’s vaccination requirements for federal contractors.

- 4. Republicans Are Blocking Vaccine and Testing Requirements:** The [National Academy for State Health Policy](#) found that nine GOP-controlled states have passed laws requiring exemptions for the federal vaccine mandate, or banning private companies from requiring vaccination altogether. Several states have made it easier for workers to claim exemptions from vaccine mandates, allowing them to decline on philosophical grounds or requiring businesses to accept all requests for religious or medical exemptions without proof.

- 5. Republicans Are Launching Congressional Attacks on Vaccines:** Republican members of Congress have filed [at least 20 bills](#) to block or roll back vaccine mandates. [Every Republican member of the Senate](#) has joined an effort led by Sen. Mike Braun to overturn the federal vaccine or test mandate using the Congressional Review Act, and [nearly every](#) Republican member of the House and Senate signed on to an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to overturn OSHA’s vaccination or testing rule. Republicans like [Rep. Nancy](#)

[Mace](#) and [Sen. Ron Johnson](#) have taken to the airwaves on Fox News and the Senate floor to promote the false idea that “natural” immunity acquired by getting sick is better protection than immunity provided by vaccines.

6. **Republicans Are Passing Bans on School Mask Mandates:** At least [eight Republican governors](#), including Gov. Greg Abbott of Texas and Gov. Ron DeSantis of Florida, have banned mask mandates in schools often putting them at odds with their own constituents and local school boards who want to protect students and teachers. Virginia’s new governor, Glenn Youngkin, wasted no time and signed an [executive order](#) banning mask mandates in schools as one of his first acts after being inaugurated. A [study in Arizona](#) found that mask mandates work and schools that required all students and staff on campus to wear face masks were 3.5 times less likely to have a coronavirus outbreak during the Delta variant surge than schools that didn’t implement masking.
7. **Republicans Are Rolling Back Local Public Health Powers:** Republicans in at least [26 states](#) have passed laws that permanently weaken government authority to protect public health. In Arkansas, legislators banned mask mandates of all kinds. In Idaho, elected county commissioners can now veto countywide public health orders. And in Kansas and Tennessee, school boards, rather than health officials, have the power to close schools.

Special Online Resources

- [Republicans Put Americans At Risk By Spreading Lies About Natural Immunity & Discouraging Vaccinations](#)
- [The Contrast Is Clear: President Biden Is Working To End The Pandemic Despite Republicans’ Sabotage](#)
- [Ron DeSantis’ Response To Coronavirus Is A Disaster For Florida](#)
- [Republican Lawmakers Are Putting Millions Of Working Americans’ Lives At Risk By Opposing OSHA’s Vaccine Or Test Rule](#)
- [Ron DeSantis Discourages Life-Saving Vaccines And Boosters In The Face Of An Omicron Surge](#)
- [Republicans Fight To Prolong Pandemic, Continue Attacking Science And Endangering American Lives](#)