

MAWA – A Modest Proposal

The COVID-19 situation in the United States, as of the third week in July 2021, is what some are calling a “pandemic of the unvaccinated.” Daily new cases and deaths are again dramatically increasing, but unlike previous spikes during the pandemic, are overwhelming among the unvaccinated population. This seems to be especially the case in states with the lowest vaccination rates.

Polling also suggests that the support for and the rate of vaccination nationally are lower among persons of Republican persuasion than among those with other political leanings. Such people also seem to more generally support the unfounded notion that somehow the last presidential election was “stolen” from Donald Trump and to reject evidence that because of it his followers tried to forcibly overturn the election results by violently storming the US Capital on January 6. The similarly aligned Congressional leaders refuse not only to seriously participate in a cross-political program of legislation but also on the state level to strategically enact laws that restrict the rights of all citizens to freely and conveniently participate in future elections.

Clearly, both the physical and democratic health of the nation is at stake. The same group of Americans seem to be the adversaries of both. So, what should we do about all this? In this regard, I am reminded of the essay by the Irish writer Jonathan Swift, anonymously published in 1729, “A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People from Being a Burthen to their Parents, or the Country, and for Making them Beneficial to the Publick,” known simply thereafter as “A Modest Proposal.” In this essay, universally hailed among the greatest examples of satirical writing in English, Swift offered a “solution” to the problem of Irish poverty and starvation by proposing with economic and social arguments that poor, young children should be fattened up by their parents and sold at a year old as food for rich people. He even suggested recipes!

This leads me to my own modest proposal. The obvious solution to the serious situation regarding our national physical and democratic health is to do two things. First, we should step back and allow the unvaccinated Republicans to become infected with COVID-19 and to die as a result. They seem intent on that anyway. So, let them have at it. Second, we should monetarily incentivize these people to not get vaccinated. All the federal warnings and encouragements and all the state lotteries for the vaccinated have largely failed. We should try rewarding people for not getting the shots. Instead of trying to reach that illusive state of herd immunity through mass vaccination, we should simply let these people become infected and die. This will result in a surviving population of not only COVID-19 immune people but also those more likely to support universal democratic principles and behaviors. Let us make America well again! MAWA

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