



## Australian Legislation Targets Parents Who Refuse to Vaccinate

In the contentious area of child vaccinations, Australia is apparently paused to go where no Western government has gone before. This week the government in Canberra announced its intention to pass new legislation that would deny tax and child care benefits to parents who refuse to vaccinate their children. According to the provisions of the “No Jab, No Pay” bill, parents who prevent their children from being vaccinated will be denied up to \$11,000.00 per child per year beginning in January. As Australian Social Services Minister Scott Morrison [told](#) the Australian Parliament, “the choice made by some families not to vaccinate their children is not supported by public policy or medical research, nor should such action be supported by taxpayers in the form of family payments.”



In other words, the science is settled, so get used to it.

Except that it isn't. There is substantial evidence that measles vaccines, for example, are not only less effective than often claimed, they actually have resulted in very significant levels of fatalities (at least 108 in the United States from 2004 to 2015) and other long-term complications. According to the late Dr. Robert Mendelsohn, longtime professor of pediatrics at the University of Illinois and prominent critic of so-called “medical paternalism”:

The measles vaccine is associated with encephalopathy and with a series of other complications such as SSPE (subacute sclerosing panencephalitis), which causes hardening of the brain and is invariably fatal....

Other neurologic and sometimes fatal conditions associated with the measles vaccine include ataxia (inability to coordinate muscle movements), mental retardation, aseptic meningitis, seizure disorders, and hemiparesis (paralysis affecting one side of the body). Secondary complications associated with the vaccine may be even more frightening. They include encephalitis, juvenile-onset diabetes, Reye's syndrome, and multiple sclerosis.

The mysterious explosion in autism has been linked to certain vaccines, the protestations of the medical establishment and the Big Pharma cartel notwithstanding. Whatever the truth of the matter, the attitude of the medical establishment — a sector that has had plenty of high-profile “fails” over the years, like the Thalidomide debacle of the early 1960s — toward the alleged dangers of vaccination is the very antithesis of honest science.



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That hasn't stopped governments from declaring war on "anti-vaxxers," as evidenced by recent efforts by the state of California, in the wake of the Disneyland measles outbreak, to crack down on parents refusing to vaccinate their children.

Now Australia, to widespread popular acclaim, is preparing to persecute the tens of thousands of Australians who refuse to vaccinate their children, quite possibly a harbinger of things to come in the United States.

But aside from the medical and scientific ramifications, is there any legal justification in the United States for compelling parents to vaccinate their children? As *The New American's* Rebecca Terrell admirably [put it](#):

Government-required vaccines amount to a gross violation of privacy rights and personal freedom, as well as abuse of the doctor-patient relationship. In a 1999 statement to the U.S. House Government Reform Committee, AAPS Executive Director Jane Orient, M.D., explained, "The relationship of patient and physician is shattered; in administering the vaccine, the physician is serving as the agent of the state." In that role, a doctor is forced to violate the time-honored Hippocratic Oath whereby he swears to act in the best interests of his individual patient, a principle reflected in the AAPS motto: *Omnia pro aegroto* ("All for the patient"). "Instead, he is applying the new population-based ethic in which the interests of the individual patient may be sacrificed to the 'needs of society.'"

Orient stated that government-mandated vaccines mark a shocking reversal of traditional public health policy. In the past, authorities restricted individual liberty "only in case of a clear and present danger," such as a quarantine of individuals infected with a dangerous communicable disease. "Today, a child may be deprived of his liberty to associate with others, or even of his supposed right to a public education, simply because of being unimmunized," said Orient. It does not matter that he is uninfected or that he poses no "clear and present danger." He is guilty until proven innocent — or in this case, until immunized.

There can be little doubt that some vaccines have conferred extraordinary benefits on society. Gone are the days when the likes of polio, smallpox, diphtheria, and scarlet fever killed or crippled for life millions of Americans. Smallpox has been eradicated, and polio nearly so, by worldwide immunization. However, treating unvaccinated children like lepers or compelling parents to subject their children to modern immunization programs entailing dozens of shots is contrary to both the traditional ethics of medicine and the workings of a free society.

Well does this author remember the swine flu hysteria of 1976, when he was in junior high school. The local school district, in response to panicked propaganda emitted by the federal government, began urging all parents to have their children vaccinated. My parents were among the few who did not succumb to the hysteria, at least in my school district. I remember sitting smugly in the gym watching nearly all my classmates stand in line for the vaccine — a vaccine that soon proved both ineffective and dangerous, and was dropped within a few months. In the end, the great swine flu scare (like its more recent editions) proved to be more a byproduct of government panic-mongering than solid science, and large numbers of Americans eventually figured it out.

One lesson to be learned from episodes such as this one is that all vaccines are not created equal. Some have more of a track record than others; flu vaccines, in particular, are often rushed into production in response to rapidly-developing new flu strains, and are frequently ineffective. Moreover, vaccines



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seldom if ever confer total lifelong immunity. While the decline in many dangerous diseases of the past, such as polio and smallpox, may indeed be ascribed to vaccines, many others — such as malaria and tuberculosis — have declined because of environmental and sanitation factors, as well as improved medical treatment.

The wide and unquestioning public acceptance of vaccines, coupled with ever-greater resolve of governments to impose them on everyone regardless of medical risks and legal ramifications, should be alarming to all freedom-loving Americans. Already routinely cited as a salutary example of comprehensive firearms confiscation, will Australia now become the poster child for universal compulsory vaccinations?



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