

No Job, No Job?

At a growing number of workplaces there have been moves towards mandatory COVID-19 vaccinations for employees-- a source of controversy in some cases. For some, the idea of mandating vaccines is seen as an important step towards moving towards a post-pandemic world. For others, it represents an attack on their individual freedom.

If the point is to protect people, the evidence is clear. While not perfect, the vaccines are doing their job. Studies and reports from medical facilities all over the world continue to show that fully vaccinated people are much less likely to catch the virus, much less likely to be hospitalized from it, and even less likely to die from it.

In addition, vaccine mandates are nothing new. Anyone who's attended a public school or who's gone through the immigration process into the U.S. was obligated to be vaccinated for a range of diseases such as Hepatitis B, Measles and Polio.

There are many reasons to not trust the government, the media and the pharmaceutical industry. They protect corporate profits above all, and of course, they don't have workers' interests at heart! Because of this disorienting situation, it is understandable why people would be suspicious of the vaccines.

Rather than engaging in a real education campaign to answer people's legitimate concerns about the vaccine, the government and companies are essentially threatening people with losing their livelihoods if they don't take the vaccine. Rather than building trust in the vaccine, this only weakens it.

We should get the vaccine to protect ourselves and others around us, AND we should not agree to give the bosses the power to come after the unvaccinated, because this power can be used against any of us.

The stresses brought on by the pandemic have been hard felt, and we are all ready to move on. The people who are really in power would love us to be pointing fingers at each other for who is responsible the situation we continue to find ourselves in. Unvaccinated people are not responsible for the pathetic response to the virus by the government. We can't afford to blame each other. The only chance working people have to

stand up for a better future depends on how united, not divided, we are. Unity is our best shot.

The Missing Drivers

Drivers, drivers everywhere, but not the ones we need. If we look at the crowded streets and freeways right now, it would seem there are an abundance of drivers—one wouldn't think that there was a shortage of bus and truck drivers. But that is the case, with many older commercial drivers' license holders who took the opportunity to retire and not have to deal with Covid-19 (imagine limited restaurants, bathrooms, and the reality of catching a deadly virus as easily as catching a cold). The demand for shipped goods also soared massively due to the pandemic.

If you don't believe it, you can look how the industry was offering bonuses (some in excess of \$5,000) for people willing to drive a school bus at the beginning of the school year. The trucking industry is also looking to lower the minimum age to 18 from 21 for interstate travel and adding trucking to the list of industries that can bypass some of the Department of Labor's immigration certification process. All to find more workers who are actually willing to put up with the tough life on the road.

Even though companies have offered higher wages, signing bonuses and increased benefits, their efforts haven't done enough to attract workers to an industry with grueling hours and a difficult life-work balance. How about actually dealing with the problems of this industry, and then there wouldn't be any missing drivers!

