

## **Majority Rules: Keep It That Way**

*Letter to the Editor, Brunswick Beacon, 10.07.21*

Obtuse statements like “masks don’t work” and “deaths almost only occur with comorbidity, not the young” have infected letters to the editor concerning COVID-19. Most Americans know better. A recent Monmouth poll found that majorities of Americans support vaccine mandates, and 66% support school mask requirements.

Republicans like David Rouzer oppose such mandates in the name of individual choice. But, the pandemic is a public health issue, not his political football. More Americans agree with John Adams, who stated, “facts are stubborn things.” Facts: vaccines are safe and effective, and masks help prevent the spread of COVID.

I’m confounded by people who oppose mask mandates intended to protect vulnerable schoolchildren. As a parent and teacher, I’ve seen firsthand how adaptable kids are; a piece of cloth won’t stop them from learning, but can save their lives. School closures do derail their education, however. 1,800 American schools, with 933,000 students, have closed due to COVID outbreaks this fall (CDC).

The American Academy of Pediatrics reports that over 5.5 million children have contracted COVID. Nearly 500 have died. Doctors at Johns Hopkins warn of unknown long-term effects of the disease. A historical harbinger is polio; “post-polio syndrome” describes the devastating consequences to some survivors, decades after mild infections. In the 1950s, Americans chose public safety over selfish obsessions with “individual choice,” and by 1979, vaccines had eliminated the disease in the U.S. (CDC).

“Those that fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it” (Winston Churchill). Fortunately, a large majority of Americans legitimately and resoundingly rejected the authoritarian figurehead of the fact-denying minority. We must keep voting to repudiate his disciples. In North Carolina, that means replacing Congressman Rouzer and Senator Burr in 2022 with public servants who learn from history and follow life-saving science.

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