

Kevin McCarthy Holds Troops Hostage

Letter to the Editor, [Brunswick Beacon](#), 12.15.22

Winter is coming. So are more unnecessary COVID deaths. Since vaccines became widely available in [May 2021](#), MAGA-Republicans have gotten far fewer vaccinations and suffered much higher death rates. [NPR's analysis](#) found counties that voted strongly for Trump had [226%](#) the death rate of strongly Biden counties. [Brown University's](#) study shows 320,000 Americans have died needlessly due to vaccine refusal. The first thing MAGA-Republicans did with their razor-thin majority was inflict that same needless risk on our troops.

Kevin McCarthy wants to be Speaker of the House like a kid wants Christmas. Putting political self-interest before his duty to the troops, he's [refusing to fund the military](#) unless it drops its COVID vaccine requirement. The services [administer](#) 17 mandatory vaccines to service members. McCarthy objected only to COVID vaccination, to win MAGA-Republican votes for Speaker.

Department of Defense (DOD) Secretary Lloyd Austin [mandated](#) COVID vaccination "to protect the Force and defend the American people." Responding to McCarthy, [Austin said](#): "A million people died in the United States. We lost hundreds in DOD. This mandate has kept people healthy." Austin [says](#) "mission-critical inoculation is almost as old as the U.S. military itself." Indeed, it began with George Washington, who survived smallpox at 17, acquiring lifelong immunity and facial scars.

The 1775-1782 [smallpox epidemic](#) killed 130,000 Americans, equal to 17 million deaths today. When it ravaged the Continental Army Washington called it "[the most dangerous enemy](#)" to the newborn nation.

Inoculation began in the colonies in [1721](#). Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, John Adams and Martha Washington were [all](#) inoculated. So were [British troops](#), who successfully defended Canada from an American army stricken with smallpox. Washington then [ordered](#) his troops to be inoculated, saying there was "more to dread from [smallpox] than from the Sword of the Enemy."

McCarthy is holding troops hostage so he can hold the speaker's gavel. Washington would hold him in contempt.

Eric Terashima
Leland

