

## **The Least We Can Do**

*Letter to the Editor, State Port Pilot, 09.15.21*

The twentieth anniversary of 9/11 brings memories of unspeakable horror — and unsurpassed sacrifice. At the Twin Towers, 403 first responders gave their lives to save others. After Flight 77 crashed into the Pentagon, coworkers carried the helpless to safety. Aboard Flight 93, passengers fought the hijackers, downing the plane to abort its path to the White House.

Twenty years ago, Americans came together selflessly to fight a common enemy — without regard for politics. Today, we have a common enemy in COVID-19. To date it has killed 660,000 Americans. Medical science on the virus is clear: vaccines vastly reduce the rate of serious illness requiring hospitalization, and masks help stop its spread.

COVID-19 vaccines were developed during the previous administration and rolled out during the current one. Yet, this life-saving solution has become a political issue. The vaccination rate among Democrats is 88%; among Republicans, it is 55%. People who disregarded medical experts' advice to get vaccinated are monopolizing hospital beds, begging those same professionals to keep them alive.

Now, pediatric Covid cases are higher than ever. Masks are the only defense for children under 12. Yet eight Republican governors have tried to prohibit local school boards from requiring masks, ignoring CDC guidance. Parents are even becoming violent toward school staff over mask rules.

Misplaced partisanship has kept Americans from rallying together. We need to remember the heroes of 9/11. They gave their lives for their fellow Americans. The least we can do is get vaccinated.

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