

# Parents May Not Force Other People's Kids to Wear Masks

This is a rather heated conversation from about a month ago on reddit. The original post was linking to a discord for parents who want mask mandates in schools here in Salt Lake City. I responded, "If you want your kid to wear a mask, have him wear a mask. otherwise mind your own business." The following (and more) ensued.

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**azucarleta:** Next you people will be railing against hand washing. I mean this shouldn't be all that surprising, these are the same people against sex ed.

Why not say the kids who won't wear masks can stay home? That would also fulfil your childish ethics. A system in which some schools mandate all the kids who will not wear masks and a different school that mandates all the kids who must wear masks. That also would be compatible with your childish ethics. But nah You're just a Trumper who thinks he's philosophical and cool but you're just an ugly Trumper.

**Skyler:** You don't know me. Stop pretending you do. It makes you a liar.

**azucarleta:** You are redditting in your own name, as if you believe yourself to be someone who deserves and ought to "make a name for himself." You author — under this same name — a number of blogs that espouse the philosophy of voluntarism.

And yet you want to *force* via state power kids to go to schools in which not everyone is wearing a mask, even though those who wish for everyone to wear a mask have a rational basis for that desire (it's called germ theory, and it's the same logic behind universal handwashing ffs).

Why the hell haven't you contemplated a more voluntary solution than simply the Trump party line? Stop pretending.

**Skyler:** Are you fucking kidding me? If you believe I want to force anyone to school, you obviously don't know me. Try again. Stop lying.

Here's the solution: if you want to wear a mask, or want your kids to wear a mask, do it. End of solution. It's your prerogative to protect yourself and your kids. No one else's.

**azucarleta:** You're not reckoning with the point I am making. Or are you poorly doing so?

Are you suggesting that workers at a school — either a majority or consensus, take your pick — should be able to voluntarily decide among themselves they work at a Mask

Mandate school, and then everyone else can voluntarily decide whether they want to go into that school knowing that it is a Mask Mandate school? Because that's a far cry — and a far more radical and sophisticated position — than what your top-level comment suggests.

Your top-level comment is the covid-mask equivalent of “let them eat cake.” It's not helpful, and it reveals not only callousness but your cluelessness. I feel like I understand the philosophy you claim to promote more than you do.

edit: in short, you're a voluntarist until things get mucky and would make people whisper about you at church, at which point you revert to Trumpism (but maintain your position has been consistently voluntariest all along, comically). I wonder if you are cunning about this or ignorant to your own shiftiness.

**Skyler:** The problem here is the existence of government, non-private schools, all of which should be abolished. Government schools are by their nature political schools, and so the decisions they make are political. Disagreements abound in politics and have a way of getting messy. I abhor politics, and government schools. Privatize everything. Then the owner makes the decision and everyone else is either welcomed, or not. Simple. That's the voluntaryist solution.

Saying that some workers can decide what other workers have to do does not mean they are being “voluntary”. Governments shouldn't be making this decision (or any decision) since governments (states) should not exist. They create conflict. All government should do, if they are to exist, is protect property rights and liberty. That's it. That's their only proper role. Anything beyond this is tyranny.

Find a school that allows masks, and instruct your child to wear a mask. Or better yet, keep your child out of compulsory forms of miseducation. Nobody needs to force anyone else to do anything. Everyone can protect themselves without anyone else's cooperation. Demanding that others wear masks or get vaccinated proves that it's not about safety, but control. Fuck off.

**azucarleta:** You've not explained why you are not advocating for a system in which pro-mask people go to school A, and anti-mask people go to school B. As a matter of public health, I'm not really sure that would even help much, however it's a lot more practically voluntary than your “let them eat cake” position.

And you're kind of the least helpful, most annoying kind of philosopher/radical. One who says essentially, “well I haven't anything useful to add because frankly y'all everything we see is poisoned fruit of a poison tree!” A more intellectual anarchist knows their philosophy is a *moral* philosophy, not a political one, and can be applied even in the least hospitable of situations. No matter the context, one can always find a way to be more cooperative, and less hierarchical/authoritarian/coercive. You just don't seem to be that kind of anarchist; by

my way of scoring, that makes you an anarchist not at all. Which is fine, I think pretty much everyone radical, liberal, moderate or extremist knows that “anarcho-capitalists” are just extremist capitalists without any anarchism in sight lol.

**Skyler:** I’m not sure why you think “everyone choose for themselves” is “hierarchical/authoritarian/coercive”. It’s the opposite, and a very good solution.

Please, tell me, how is voluntary choice “hierarchical/authoritarian/coercive”? Use logic.

**azucarleta:** Please stay moored to the issue at hand. We, at the moment, have a system of compulsory education. You may oppose that regime (as do I), but it is what it is today and for the foreseeable future, it’s the context we in the commentariat must reckon with if we are being serious about real-world solutions and not simply philosophically masturbating. I certainly hope, but sort of doubt, we agree so far.

So long as we presume compulsory education will continue indefinitely (if you can’t do that you’re a radical child) we must turn now to the next big piece of context, an infectious pandemic.

Why would someone committed to voluntarism not acknowledge that allowing people to voluntarily sort themselves is preferable to forcing polarized opposing sides to coalesce around one pole or the other? Your insistence that polarized people must coalesce in schools in which universal mask wearing is not a feature — and that no school functioning as a magnet for like-minded folks may have a universal mask wearing code — is functioning as an authoritarian/coercive force, given the context of compulsory education. Your position is not allowing people who want universal mask wearing to group together and have a school or system of schools in which mask wearing is universal.

**Skyler:** You’re telling a voluntaryist that one or two people is going to get shot in the head. That’s the reality, and I must choose.

No, I don’t have to choose. It’s everybody’s own prerogative to choose for themselves what risks they want to take. If they deem that school without a mask mandate is too risky for them, then it’s their prerogative to stay home or to keep their kids home.

Everyone may choose for themselves, but no one may choose for others. It’s not difficult or complex, and it works.

**azucarleta:** Again I accuse you of being ignorant of the muckiness or being aware of it but pretending it doesn’t exist in order to espouse the Trump party line while maintaining you’re not a party man.

Why shouldn’t it be those who refuse to wear a mask who have to stay home? Why

shouldn't we recognize that mask wearing is just as benign but also as helpful as hand-washing and as a result create rules around it that teach kids good practice? Why do you believe those who wish to not wear a mask get all the schools and those who wish to have universal mask wearing get zero schools? How do you justify that knowing that education is compulsory, taxpaying is compulsory, and that universal mask wearing is an extremely popular position?

**Skyler:** Because one side is using aggression, and the other is not. Think about it.

**azucarleta:** You're such a lightweight dude. The state will collect my taxes at gunpoint should I be foolish enough to try to refuse to pay. The state will take my child to school by force if I am foolish enough to decide to not educate them to the state standard. Both of these will be done very aggressively. That is the undebated unyielding reality of our current context, pandemic or no pandemic.

And in that context of an infectious pandemic you wish for zero of the schools that people are aggressively forced to pay for and attend to have universal mask wearing as a policy. Why shouldn't the government be more complex and offer policy A to people who want policy A, and offer policy B, at different facilities, for people who want policy b? Wouldn't that be less coercive and more voluntary for those subject to the whole scheme?

**Skyler:** Look at the mental gymnastics over a fucking mask mandate.

People do the exact same mental gymnastics to justify banning marijuana, banning alcohol, banning speech, banning protest, banning guns, banning homosexuality, banning any and everything they dislike. And oh yes, even banning masks.

Mind your own business.

**azucarleta:** Where my taxes go and where the state forces my children to go is my fucking business dimwit.

Delete your accounts.

**Skyler:** So because you're a victim, that gives you the right to use aggression against other victims?

**azucarleta:** I see this point of course but you see I think the simplest solution\*\* is to tell those who won't wear masks that they may do online or home schooling only, and that in person school relies on appropriate precautions. You see, you have unchecked "default settings" that for you define who is being aggressive. I find luddites who insist on being in public shared spaces in a pandemic without taking precautions to be negligent and showing unwarranted disregard for public safety. Call it aggressive to keep you out of

school, but personally I find it quite aggressive that you would force your way in. Your use of “Aggressive” here is unchecked entitlement, defined by personal values, relational, meaningless. It simply begs the question really.

**\*\*But I think we can do much better than simple solutions.**

**Skyler:** “public safety”: the clarion call of tyrants large and small everywhere. good luck with that.

**azucarleta:** you seem to be dodging this question: Why shouldn’t there be a set of Universal Mask schools for workers and families who prefer that, parallel to Mask Anarchy schools for people who prefer that? After all, this is probably going to be going on for years, why not start self sorting for the long haul? It’s a real question, not some gotcha.

Why shouldn’t the government cater to both and let people self-sort? Why must one solution be chosen and everyone forced to it? Isn’t it less coercive if the government tries to cater to polarized people rather than forcing them to coalesce?

**Skyler:** Why don’t we bypass the state entirely and let everyone fund the schools of their choice? Less aggression all around, everyone wins.

**azucarleta:** I don’t know why it’s such a problematic question that you would dodge answering it at least 3 times, but that makes me more curious. Your distracting theoretical question here is fine, but I want to set it aside for now. I’ll ask again and would you please: Why shouldn’t the government provide Universal Mask schools in the community commensurate with the level of interest there is for Universal Mask schools among faculty, staff and students? Isn’t it a bit, um, authoritarian to insist that one solution must be the solution?

It’s a real question because kids and workers with health complications — who maybe can’t even get vaccinated — would really prefer to attend work and school with the double-mask double-vax type of people, and not the types whose parents got drinks after the Garth Brooks concert entirely unmasked and unvaxed. Why not let people voluntarily associate/find their tribe? Why should the Mask Anarchy tribe’s way of doing things be the way everyone is forced to do it in every public school statewide?

**Skyler:** I’ve answered it very clearly, you just don’t like my answer.

I’m against mask mandates and I’m against anti-mask mandates. Everybody should be free to choose if and how many masks they want to wear. And everybody should be free to choose who they will allow on to their property.

**azucarleta:** Oh, that’s your answer? You should show your work, so I know you’re giving

an answer. How did you come to that conclusion given your supposed “anarchist” leanings? You’re/your position is/would be basically making it impossible for people to associate only with those who they choose to associate. You’re making it impossible for people to freely dis-associate from people who won’t mask and vax and shit, and how can you justify that imposition when germ theory explains exactly why their desire is rational and not just some empty hate? With whom I associate is no longer voluntary in the least, should/when your view rules the day.

To help me understand: So if a charter school wishes to impose a mask mandate, is that ok with you? More importantly, could a charter be established around the idea of Universal Masks (and vax for those eligible) as its foundational establishing principle?

**Skyler:** Depends on whether or not my child attends said charter school. I am free to agitate either way. I am not free to pull out my gun and use aggression to get what I want, or to advocate for the state to do likewise. If I don’t get what I want, I can either live with it, or pull my kid out. Or better, give my kid the choice for themselves (as I do as an unschooling father with a middle child “trying” school for the first time at 11yo).

*You’re making it impossible for people to freely dis-associate from people who won’t mask and vax and shit*

This is demonstrably false. Mine is the only way for everyone to associate or disassociate with whomever they please. The problem, as always, is something I give zero support to: public services and public property. Privatize everything.

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Voluntaryism is simple: don’t hurt people, don’t take their stuff, don’t ask permission, and mind your own business. Obviously the state is a thorn, nay, a tusk, in society’s side and forces neighbor to hate, to attack neighbor. Disgusting, isn’t it?