

On Getting Vaccinated

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With Aaron Rodgers out for a game for testing positive for COVID-19, progressive activist Laura Kiefert speaks out on the community responsibility to get vaccinated.

GREEN BAY, WI - I'm sick and tired of the vaccination debate and just as tired of keeping my frustration on the subject to myself. So here goes. I think that as a society, we have an obligation to safeguard one another. Yes, you get vaccinated to protect yourself – but you also get vaccinated to protect those around you. And we do this in order to control or eradicate diseases that ravage our population.

I believe everybody who is eligible should be required to get vaccinated if they want to engage with others in public spaces. In the interest of public health, vaccines or a recent negative test should be required to enter virtually all public spaces. If you want to go to a restaurant, bar, train

station or concert, for example, you need to show proof of vaccination or a recent negative test.

If a person chooses not to get vaccinated, they should stay home because no one has the right to infect others with a potentially deadly illness. I believe it is the ultimate act of selfishness to decide that your individual decision must take precedence over the literal life and death of the people around you.

We are talking here about someone choosing an unhealthy diet – something you could argue only affects an individual. We're talking about a very contagious disease that is so easily transmissible it's killed more than 750,000 Americans and millions of people around the world have died. And, it isn't over yet.

Vaccination is not only a matter of individual choice because there are immunosuppressed Americans who do not have full immunity from the vaccine and there are many people, including our young children, who aren't vaccinated, yet. How is it right that someone can opt to not be vaccinated and then spread the illness to vulnerable groups who did not make the choice to be so vulnerable?

So vaccination cannot be perceived as an individual choice. Instead, we need to equate it much more so to drunk driving. You can drink in private – that's your choice – but you can't just decide to get behind the wheel because you feel like it and don't think you'll get hurt. We have laws against drunk driving, since individual choice to undertake a dangerous public activity cannot override the need to protect the public from deadly harm.

We all want our kids to go to school without being sent home constantly due to positive cases and the need to quarantine. We want workplaces to come back without the need for masks and distancing. We want our economy to thrive and travel to return to pre-pandemic normal. If we want those things to happen, then it's necessary for all people who are eligible in those environments to be vaccinated.

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