

May 6, 2021, is the National Day of Reason. It is held on the first Thursday in May each year, the same day as the National Day of Prayer. Pittsburgh Freethought Community urges all residents of southwestern Pennsylvania to join us in observing the Day of Reason and emphasize the use of reason, critical thought, the scientific method, and free inquiry to solve human problems and to promote the welfare of citizens across the globe.

One way to support reason and science is to get the COVID-19 vaccine. The vaccine is the fastest way to curtail the spread of the disease and the emergence of new variants and resume our normal life and economy.¹

Already more than half of U.S. adults have received at least one dose of the coronavirus vaccine, but more than 40 percent of Republicans have repeatedly told pollsters they're not planning to be vaccinated.²

Of course, we need the vaccine-deniers to change their minds in order to reach herd immunity. Many of us want to counter the myths that the vaccine contains a tracking device, will change DNA, or that it will reduce fertility.³ Some businesses and lawmakers want to require vaccine passports that would allow the vaccinated to enter sports events, concerts, and other large social gatherings and to allow vaccinated travelers to bypass COVID testing requirements.⁴

A focus group of 17 vaccine-denying Trump voters revealed that bullying them, shaming them, telling them about the possible need for booster shots, and having Dr. Anthony Fauci talking to the media actually reinforce their anti-vaccine beliefs. However, they said that they would listen to Republican politicians and their personal physicians.²

According to the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, some Republicans have begun to acknowledge that vaccine hesitancy is a public health problem. A group of Republican doctors in Congress released a public-service video, and even Mr. Trump suggested on Fox News Channel that he'd be willing to record a video urging vaccination.⁵

So if you want to influence the vaccine deniers, write to Senator Pat Toomey and local Republican lawmakers and urge them to tell their constituents to get vaccinated and disseminate information on how to make an appointment. You can also talk to your personal physician about urging all their patients to get vaccinated.

Finally, you may wish to join members of the Pittsburgh Freethought Community at 7pm (EST) for the Zoom entertainment extravaganza, entitled "Mayday for Humanity," that is being hosted by Freethought Society (Philadelphia) and related groups. Register at https://www.ftsociety.org/2021/03/27/mayday-for-humanity/?utm_source=rss&utm_medium=rss&utm_campaign=mayday-for-humanity

¹<https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/conditions-and-diseases/coronavirus/covid19-vaccine-hesitancy-12-things-you-need-to-know>

² <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2021/04/20/vaccine-hesitant-republicans>

³ <https://govstatus.egov.com/md-coronavirus-rumor-control/vaccine-rumors>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/apr/29/us-vaccine-passports-coronavirus-covid>

⁵ https://www.post-gazette.com/news/2021/05/01/GOP-seeks-to-convince-vaccine-skeptics-within-its-own-ranks/stories/202105010060?utm_source=spotim&utm_medium=spotim_recirculation