

The Zero-Sum Game

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About a week ago, the mayor of Orland Park, one of Chicago's major suburbs, issued another commonsense approach message to the citizens of Orland. Throughout this past year, Mayor Keith Pekau (peck'-ow) has actually led not only the people of his community, but a number of the other surrounding communities in the approach to good government, as envisioned in the beginning by those who formed this Republic under God's direction. Here are a few highlights his message:

Orland Park fared fairly well because it took a commonsense approach that emphasized keeping the public informed, taking moderate safety measures and allowing our residents to use their own best judgment.

Last week we were informed by District 135 that all of our summer camp participants would be required to wear masks while in District 135 buildings! I made the decision with the support of the board of trustees to move our summer camp activities to the village of Orland Park Cultural Center and allow parents to make the decisions for their children.

Apparently the District 135 requirement is due to the most recent mandates from the Illinois Department of public health (IDPH) and the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE).

While investigating, I was also made aware of our local school regulations regarding both masks and vaccines, which are concerning in my opinion. We should be letting parents make these choices and not singling out our children. Here are several reasons why:

First, other states and the village of Orland Park have shown that a common sense approach works! Case rates across states have not been correlated to opening decisions! This is also true of states with schools that were open the longest.

The village of Orland Park allowed businesses to open, the sports tournaments to resume, and concerts and events to take place. And as you can see, our mortality rate per capita is lower than the state and county!

The mayor then goes on to cite a good deal of actual statistical data while reminding the citizens of Orland of the governmental foolishness over the last year:

IDPH and ISBE have horrible track records and continue with policies that are illogical. For example, remember when you weren't allowed to play golf or go to the park—outdoor activities we always knew were safe? Remember when thousands of people could pack into Walmart, Costco, Target, etc., while you couldn't go to locally owned small businesses? Because apparently Covid lurked in small businesses but not big box stores!

Remember when you could drive to a boat ramp with your entire family but only two of you were allowed to get on the boat?

Remember when ten people could meet safely as a group inside, as long as you didn't eat or drink and it wasn't in a restaurant?

This is just a sampling of the illogical policies from state government policies that many other mayors join me in pointing to as unscientific. . . .

IDPH is saying that kids need to remain masked in school if they're unvaccinated, even though children under 12 cannot receive vaccines.

Additionally, the FDA has added a warning about the risk of myocarditis and pericarditis from taking the vaccine primarily due to side effects experienced by adolescent boys and young men. But the CDC still recommends vaccinating children over 12!

With all this conflicting information, it appears that we are going to require kids to wear masks if they are unvaccinated and play sports!

When will this madness end? Let's let parents consult with their doctors and make the decisions that they deem best for their children!

He then lays out accumulated evidence of the successful commonsense approaches to in-person learning throughout the past year, and then continues by stating,

All teachers have had the opportunity to be vaccinated. Orland Park residents are well ahead of the state and county with regard to COVID vaccinations. . . .

It is true that immunizations are required for children to attend school for diseases such as diphtheria, tetanus, measles, mumps, pertussis, polio, chickenpox, rubella, and meningitis.

These diseases are more contagious, and/or more lethal and/or debilitating to children. Additionally, these vaccines were fully tested before being made available, much less mandatory. *It should also be noted that there are medical and religious exemptions for all these vaccinations.*

While all agencies are careful to say the vaccine is not mandatory for children, policies that single them out, like masking for sports or quarantine for two weeks home, are de-facto efforts to shame children and parents into an emergency use vaccination!

Finally, after sharing a good deal of relevant historical data gathered from experience over the last 16 months, he concludes with,

It is time to stop putting controls and government mandates on our children and let parents, with the help of their family doctors and the public information that is widely available, decide what is best for their children!

Brethren, along these same lines some in the media have been asking similar questions. Recently Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham, both Fox News commentators and reasonable people, have asked many of the same questions that have perplexed reasonable people like Mayor Pekau, especially in light of President Biden's recent push for government mandates to the point of threatening a door-to-door vaccination inquisition.

But the government response came in this diatribe on the floor of the Senate from Senator Dick Durbin, the Senior Senator from Illinois and the Democratic Majority Whip in the Senate:

There are two hosts of programs on Fox Primetime that can only be characterized as anti-vax quacks. I'm referring of course to Tucker Carlson and Laura Ingraham. They have been spreading what I consider to be irresponsible information about vaccines across America and about the effort of this nation to deal with them!

This led to Tucker Carlson's response the following evening:

Spreading irresponsible information?! Notice Durbin doesn't accuse us of spreading *false* information. He did not accuse us of being *factually wrong*. We haven't been. Nor are we against vaccines. Few Americans are against vaccines. Virtually every American has had a ton of vaccines and was expecting to take this one.

But when you refuse to answer basic questions about the vaccine, and when you dodge them with partisan talking points like that, you make people nervous. Americans have the right to have basic questions answered before taking a medicine, that is their right! But . . . pretending that any resistance to mass vaccination is somehow partisan . . . (is) a provable lie.

With all of this in mind, please listen to some pertinent excerpts from an article entitled, “Why We Are a Divided Nation.” The commentator writes:

Recent elections pointed to deepening divisions among American people, but has anyone given serious thought to just why? I have part of the answer, which starts off with a simple example.

Different Americans have different and intensive preferences for cars, food, clothing, and entertainment. For example, some Americans love opera and hate rock and roll. Others have opposite preferences, loving rock and roll and hating opera. When's the last time you heard of rock-and-roll lovers in conflict with opera lovers? It seldom, if ever, happens. Why? Those who love operas get what they want, and those love rock and roll get what they want, and both can live in peace with one another.

Suppose that instead of freedom in the music market, decisions on what kind of music people could listen to were made in the political arena. It would be either opera or rock and roll. Rock and rollers would be lined up against opera lovers. Why? It's simple. If the opera lovers win, rock and rollers would lose, and the reverse would happen if rock and rollers won. Conflict would emerge solely because the decision was made in the political arena.

The prime feature of political decision-making is that it's a “zero-sum game.” One person or group's gain is, of necessity, another person or group's loss. As such, political allocation of resources is conflict enhancing, while market allocation is conflict reducing. The greater the number of decisions made in the political arena, the greater is the potential for conflict.

The commentator then goes on to explain in comparison, this country, and unlike any other in the world, though not perfect, has lived in relative harmony because, as he puts it, “for the most of our history government was small. There wasn't much pie to distribute politically.”

He continues:

When it's the political arena that determines who gets what goodies, the most effective coalitions are those with a proven record of being the most divisive—those based on race, ethnicity, religion, and region. As a matter of fact, our most costly conflict involved a coalition based upon region—namely the war of 1861.

Many of the issues that divide us are those best described as a “zero-sum game,” where one group’s gain is of necessity another’s loss!

The commentator then warns:

You might be tempted to think that the brutal domestic conflicts seen in other countries in other times can't happen here. That's nonsense! Americans are not superhumans; we possess the same frailties of other people in other places. If there were a severe economic calamity, I can imagine a political hustler exploiting those frailties here just as Adolph Hitler did in Germany, blaming it on Jews, the blacks, the East Coast, Catholics or free trade.

The best thing the president and Congress can do to heal our country is to reduce the impact of government on our lives. Doing so will not only produce a less divided country and greater economic efficiency, but bear greater faith and allegiance to the vision of America held by our founders—a country of limited government.

Brethren, that insightful article that I dug out of my important saved articles file was written for Townhall.com in 2004 by Walter E. Williams. But obviously the conflicts of the “zero-sum” political game loom larger today than ever.

But within these circumstances, what does God expect of His elect? Well, as Walter Williams said, I have part of the answer. As Ecclesiastes 10:4 admonishes us, “Do not leave your post,” while remembering our own responsibility within the Body of Christ to be dedicated to what we are told in Psalm 133:1 and Ephesians 4:3: “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is

for brethren to dwell together in unity" . . . "endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace."