



The Biden Administration's Travel Policy Doesn't Make Sense

Last week, I went to the Netherlands for a series of speeches in Amsterdam and The Hague on the U.S. Midterm elections. In order to travel to the European Union, I just needed to show I had been vaccinated. Upon arrival at Schiphol Airport in Amsterdam, I went to the self-service customs machines, put my passport on the scanner, and had my picture taken. In less than a minute, I was through customs and on my way to the city. The much-maligned EU bureaucracy seemed to have met its match at Schiphol Airport.

Absurdly, my return trip to America was not as simple.

In order to board the airplane, I had to again show I had been vaccinated and meet one of two other Biden Administration requirements. The first option was a note from my treating physician indicating I had had COVID within the last 90 days via a test administered by his office, had fully recovered, and was clear to travel. The note had to include a copy of the positive COVID test. Because I have not had COVID, I couldn't avail myself of this option.

That left the second option, which required me to go get a COVID test with a negative result no more than one day before my flight. Beyond the \$48.45 I had to spend to get the test near the airport, the problem with this requirement is that it shreds the very idea that what I had received in the first place was a vaccine; rather, the "vaccine" is little more than a pre-therapeutic that doesn't prevent infection, but merely lessens the symptoms. We should call it what it is (a pre-therapeutic) and not what it isn't (a vaccine).

One has to ask: if everyone on the airplane is vaccinated and the pre-therapeutic lessens the symptoms, why is the Biden Administration forcing everyone to show a negative COVID test to fly? Is not the worst case that someone might get sick with mild-to-moderate symptoms? How is that result any different than if someone boards the airplane with influenza, strep, or one of other viruses that we don't require pre-travel testing? As with COVID, any one of those viruses could cause an elderly person or an immunocompromised person to be hospitalized or worse. That being the case, what is the point in requiring a negative COVID test when the Biden Administration doesn't require negative tests on other equally or more contagious and/or deadly viruses? And why is an international flight from the Netherlands treated differently than a domestic flight from Honolulu?

When I was the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, we created scenarios around biological terrorist attacks in which travelers were used to spread deadly viruses because those exposed wouldn't show symptoms until days after traveling to America. Those "human missiles" would

spread the biologically weaponized virus to scores of fellow travelers who then would take the virus back to their states and cities. By the time federal officials figured out what was happening, it would be woefully too late to stop a deadly pandemic (cough...cough...sound familiar China and COVID?). With airplanes full of pre-therapeutic passengers, COVID should be viewed now as little more than an irritant like the flu or even the common cold.

In fact, after securing my negative COVID result, I waited at the gate and watched several passengers exhibit fairly severe symptoms of illness. One woman in particular had a severe wet cough along with substantial nasal discharge. I cannot imagine she wasn't sick with a communicable virus. Nonetheless, she was cleared to travel. Unfortunately, she ended up sitting directly behind me and made sure to touch virtually every surface with her snot-stained and cough-covering hands. I and my two seatmates spent the entire flight immersed in her cough clouds, flinching every time she coughed (ok, we didn't, but some COVID worry warts would have).

If I get sick in the coming days, I'll know who gave me the virus.

The next obvious problem with this option is suffering a false positive result that would prevent returning to America and require remaining in abroad for ten days in quarantine. That result would force the victim to incur thousands of dollars in expenses and force family and her employer back in the States to deal with some real logistical issues. I've heard of Americans stranded in foreign countries for ten days hoping to test negative in order to go home. Is that really the best way for the Biden Administration to deal with citizens, especially as it allows illegal immigrants to cross the southern border without having received the pre-therapeutic shots and without giving them those shots before releasing them into our cities?

Circling back to the sick woman on my flight and the first option noted above, the data show people who get COVID can get a second infection within 90 days of an initial infection. So, what if the clearly ill woman had availed herself of that option, but had suffered a second COVID infection just days before our flight? The illogical rules allowed her to travel to the United States WITH the COVID virus, while Americans who tested positive had to endure enormous expenses and cause havoc with their families and jobs as they quarantined themselves in a foreign country.

With foreign travel hitting a peak in the coming weeks and months as students and others head to Europe and other vacation spots, this issue will entangle lots of travelers. It is time the Biden Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention follow the science and stop mandating Americans to obtain a negative COVID test to come home (while letting other viruses through), especially if international air travel continues to require all passengers to have received the pre-therapeutic COVID shots.

Enough is enough when it comes to stupid rules that don't make sense, ignore the science, and punish Americans.