

**The Constitution, COVID-19, and Civil Disobedience: Federalism in Flames and the
Slippery Slope to Socialism**

Savannah Rose Snyder

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Savannah Rose Snyder is a student of Government: Politics and Policy with a concentration in constitutional law. Savannah represented Liberty's debate team for three seasons. She is an alumnus of the Washington Crossing Foundation and plans to attend the Liberty School of Law this fall.

The Precipice

Our Constitution has been devastatingly corrupted from its original design and vision amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Governors usurped authority in the name of crisis mitigation. Our unalienable rights have been macerated and pulverized by droves of executive orders, each delivering a calamitous blow to the integrity of the American republican framework. Socialized medicine is on the horizon as our compliance is coerced. Conventional civil disobedience has been regulatorily revoked. We have succumbed to the decrees of depraved men who maintain that education, religious expression, and pursuits of happiness can be invalidated by whatever transgressions the state deems necessary. For the first time since our nation's inception and infancy, we are indisputably and dangerously vulnerable politically, economically, socially, and constitutionally with the risk of losing our republic as we know it in the modern day. We have failed in our task to be interpreters of the law and of science as we unsuspectingly surrender to and rabidly consume every mandate, health provision, restriction of business, denial of education, and prohibition of religious expression. The authors of our Constitution had unparalleled foresight. We must ask ourselves how great republics like our own fall to the whims of depraved, broken men and women. Our nation was built with checks and balances and separations of powers. However, within this crisis, we have now legitimized and endorsed exceptions to these limitations to be invoked by any executive that deems a crisis severe enough to justify oppression of civil liberties. These leaders are woefully misinformed, as these fundamental and unalienable rights do not come from man. They come from God. The preponderance of the evidence is no longer a worthy rumination in the minds of our leaders.

The Perils of Emergency Exceptions

Why is an emergency exception so tremendously dangerous and absurd? The answer can be easily found in the Weimar Constitution of Germany. Once a praised for its democratic values, the Weimar Republic added an emergency provision to its constitution with the addition of Article 48. The article reads, "If public security and order are seriously disturbed or endangered within the German Reich, the President of the Reich may take measures necessary for their restoration, intervening if need be with the assistance of the armed forces."¹ Upon first read, the construction of this article is appallingly vague and ambiguous. The interpretative avenues are far too fluid, as an ill-intentioned actor could effortlessly manipulate this clause to serve their political agenda. Those incongruous with achieving the nation's objectives could be deemed a public security risk. Under this emergency clause, the leader in power would have unfettered authority to suppress such disruptions and nuisances. That is precisely what Adolf Hitler did. The appointment of Hitler as Chancellor marked the end of the Weimar Republic. Utilizing polarizing us-versus-them propaganda, Hitler led citizens to believe that the founders of the Weimar Republic, Jews, socialists, liberals, war profiteers, ethnic minorities, and others were to blame for Germany's economic and political pitfalls which ultimately cost Germany their success in World War I. The Weimar democratic experiment abruptly ended when the Nazis usurped power and established their dictatorial regime. To clarify, this argument is not intended to be alarmist. Rather, we must analyze what precedent we have established and the possible consequences of such actions. Perhaps the change will come incrementally and subtly until our

¹ "Article 48." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. Accessed January 15, 2021. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/article-48#:~:text=This%20was%20Article%2048%2C%20which,allowed%20the%20President%20to%20suspend.>

original form of republicanism is simply unrecognizable. Joseph Goebbels, Nazi Germany's most prominent propagandist, worked alongside Hitler to purge libraries of un-German works in the name of political decontamination.² This sort of rhetoric is similarly employed today as some accuse dissenters of government expansion in the time of COVID-19 to be un-American and threats to the public peace.

The Diminution of Civil Disobedience and The Augmentation of Excused Violent Destruction

In cases of violent demonstrations, Goebbels said that spontaneous eruptions were not to be suppressed, enabling rioters to target and destroy hundreds of synagogues and Jewish businesses.³ If this sounds similar to the violent demonstrations of 2020 when then Senator Kamala Harris raised money to pay the bail of violent, unscrupulous rioters and looters, that is because it is fundamentally indistinguishable. Before continuing with the criticism of violent demonstrations, we must first examine the First Amendment of the Constitution, which reads,

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or of the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.⁴

Necessary preconditions for constitutionally protected assemblies are civility and peace. Former Senator Harris supported the Minnesota Freedom Fund that aided in the postage of bail for Minneapolis criminals.⁵ Among those bailed include individuals with charges similar to those of Jaleel Stallings, Darnika Floyd, and Christopher Boswell. Mr. Stallings was charged with attempted murder for shooting at members of SWAT during May riots using a modified pistol that resembled an AK-47. His bail totaled \$75,000 dollars. Ms. Floyd was charged with second degree murder for stabbing a friend to death, and her \$100,000 bail was paid. Finally, Mr. Boswell, a twice-convicted rapist, faced charges of kidnapping, assault, and sexual assault in two separate cases. The MFF issued \$350,000 for his bail. Vice President Harris implicitly affirmed violence and mayhem with her support of these criminals and other violators of the law. The Minneapolis rioters caused millions in property damage to black-owned businesses already struggling with the pandemic. Over 1,500 properties and businesses were damaged with over 150 destroyed.⁶

Given the threat these criminals posed to the public and to property with their violations of the law, President Trump would have been justified in suppressing the unrest with the

² "Joseph Goebbels." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/joseph-goebbels-1>.

³ "Joseph Goebbels." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2019. <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/joseph-goebbels-1>.

⁴ U.S. Const. amend. I.

⁵ "Meet the Rioting Criminals Kamala Harris Helped Bail Out of Jail." The Federalist, 2020. <https://thefederalist.com/2020/08/31/meet-the-rioting-criminals-kamala-harris-helped-bail-out-of-jail/>.

⁶ Polumbo, Brad. "Why the Economic Scars of Rioting Will Haunt Minneapolis for Decades." National Review. National Review, 2020. <https://www.nationalreview.com/2020/09/minneapolis-riots-economic-impact-will-haunt-city-for-decades/>.

National Guard in a similar fashion that President Washington employed in the Whiskey Rebellion. Following the excise tax on distilled spirits, American frontiersmen acted in displays of brutal violence where rioters burned tax collector John Neville's home.⁷ These frontiersmen acted out of destructive passion and frustration. These riots and those of our modern day are not protected under the First Amendment, and violators of the law, while innocent until proven guilty, must be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law. Failure to do so will incentivize lawlessness and disincentivize investments, especially when leaders like Harris will side with the rioters over law-abiding citizens. Representative Ocasio-Cortez remarked, "We really have to ask ourselves the question as to why so many people were okay ignoring these problems until a window got broken. Why does it take that for people to pay attention?"⁸ If we take Ms. Ocasio-Cortez's statements and apply them to the most recent storming of the Capitol, it would be just as morally apprehensible. Militancy and destruction have no place under the First Amendment, as necessary preconditions for these protections of peaceable assembly are civility and peace regardless of political affiliation or other distinguishing identity characteristics. Violence is inexcusable in all circumstances when addressing issues and grievances of inequality.

The Constitutionality of COVID-19 Relief and Restrictions

The right to free exercise of religion is one of the most foundational tenants of our republic. Our Founders fled religious and political persecution in Great Britain to establish this beloved country. Most frighteningly, the COVID-19 restrictions for places of worship are grossly unconstitutional and are demonstrative of the abuses of power that will always result from government expansion. Across the nation, there is a plethora of cases of religious discrimination, particularly in the maximum capacity regulations in comparison with those of secular institutions. In *Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that New York could not enforce its ten- to twenty-five-person congregation limit on certain Catholic churches and Orthodox synagogues because the restrictions discriminated against religious expression and violated the First Amendment.⁹ The contestation of Governor Cuomo's restrictions lies within his limitation of religious services, which are deemed "red zones," to ten people in contrast with his allowance for essential businesses to continue with unlimited admittance. "Orange zone" houses of worship could admit 25 people, but non-essential businesses could determine their own admittance limitations. The color classification of these zones was reportedly to correspond to the level of infection risk. The Court found that "the loss of First Amendment freedoms" is an irreparable harm. The restrictions were not found with aim to merely "minimize the risk" because other less restrictive rules could have been implemented. The abuse continues across the nation.

⁷ "Whiskey Rebellion." George Washington's Mount Vernon. Mount Vernon Ladies' Association. Accessed January 15, 2021. <https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/whiskey-rebellion/>.

⁸ Michaels, Samantha. "Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez Speaks to Supporters about the Minneapolis Protests." Mother Jones, 2020. <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2020/05/alexandria-ocasio-cortez-minneapolis-protests-george-floyd/>.

⁹ Faegre Drinker Biddle & Reath LLP. "Supreme Court Orders Preliminary Injunction in Roman Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn v. Cuomo". Newstex Blogs JD Supra., 2020. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61DS-S9R1-JCMN-Y0BC-00000-00&context=1516831>.

In the state of Nevada, restaurants, bars, casinos, and gyms may operate at fifty percent of their capacity, while houses of worship are limited to fifty people regardless of capacity.¹⁰ In *Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley v. Sisolak*, the church challenged the governor's decree, contesting that physical gatherings are essential to worship. While there exists a blatant disparity between the restrictions on secular institutions versus religious ones, the Supreme Court denied the church's application for injunctive relief. In his dissent, Justice Kavanaugh describes four categories of religion cases: (1) laws that explicitly discriminate against religious institutions and organizations, (2), laws that favor religious organizations and institutions, (3) laws that do not classify on the basis of religion but apply to both secular and religious organizations, and (4) laws that explicitly treat religious organization equal to some secular organization but better or worse than other secular organizations.¹¹ He maintains that the fourth category is the most pertinent to COVID litigation. He articulates,

Fourth are laws like Nevada's in this case that supply no criteria for government benefits or actions, but rather divvy up organizations into a favored or exempt category and a disfavored or non-exempt category. Those laws provide benefits only to organizations in the favored or exempt category and not to organizations in the disfavored or non-exempt category.

He also cites the disheartening and disturbing judgment on behalf of governors. He says,

Governors are making value judgments about the importance of religious worship. They have deemed it unimportant. They have decided that Churches can feed the spirit over Zoom. We need Amazon Prime, but receiving communion and reciting the mourner's Kaddish aren't essential.¹²

It is clear that governors who impose restrictions like those of New York and Nevada value profit more than faith in times of crisis.

Our nation's leaders are entrusted with a sacred task: upholding and protecting the Constitution. However, how well have they executed when placed in conditions of normality, much less conditions of chaos? The Preamble of the Constitution solidifies and presents the framework for the entirety of our most important political document. We affirm that the establishment of our nation was intended to "form a more perfect union, establish justice, insure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defence, promote the general welfare, and secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity."¹³ To achieve such a proclamation, our Congress was provided with certain enumerated powers that would aid and reasonably restrict

¹⁰ "United States Courts Opinions: UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT: CALVARY CHAPEL DAYTON VALLEY, Plaintiff-Appellant, v. STEVE SISOLAK, in his official capacity as Governor of Nevada; AARON FORD, in his official capacity as the Nevada Attorney General; FRANK HUNEWILL, in his official capacity as Sheriff of Lyon County, Defendants-Appellees.". Impact News Service. December 21, 2020
Monday. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:61K7-0HB1-F0YC-N13F-00000-00&context=1516831>.

¹¹ "The Three Dissents in Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley v. Sisolak". iCrowdNewswire (English). July 25, 2020 Saturday. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60FC-BGB1-F08D-50N5-00000-00&context=1516831>.

¹² "The Three Dissents in Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley v. Sisolak". iCrowdNewswire (English). July 25, 2020 Saturday. <https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:60FC-BGB1-F08D-50N5-00000-00&context=1516831>.

¹³ U.S. Const. pmbl.

their abilities as illustrated and supported by the inclusion of the term “herein.” If an action lies beyond the bounds of those eighteen allowances within Article 1, Section 8, the congressional action is unconstitutional by default. These enumerated actions must also be targeted and executed in their intentions to achieve a specific purpose, not to be subject to the whims of one or a few. The most recent economic relief packages passed by Congress failed to deliver such explicit purposes and consequences. The General Welfare Clause is not a blank check. The December 2020 stimulus bill totaled over \$900 billion in “relief” to various entities.¹⁴ A few of these ludicrous appropriations include \$15 billion for airlines that already received \$25 billion in the previous package, \$14 billion for transit and \$10 billion for state highways, \$82 billion for education, and \$7 billion for expanding broadband access. The bill also included \$600 stimulus checks to those earning less than \$75,000 a year, a weekly \$300 unemployment supplement, over \$8 billion for vaccine distribution and Paycheck Protection Program loans, and over \$25 billion for rental assistance along with an extension of the federal eviction moratorium.

Our government has taken away the tools and mechanisms necessary to make a living in the name of safety and expects the American public to praise them for their unconstitutional expenditures. These overreaches are insulting and patronizing. Our political leaders want the American public to comply with their demands for restrictive living as they appropriate millions in foreign aid for objectives from quelling the narcotics crisis in Burma to fighting for women’s rights in Pakistan.¹⁵ The sufferings of the American people are belittled. Furthermore, the foreign aid spending is completely irrelevant to resolving the crisis of COVID-19 for the American people. These expenditures do not provide for the common defense nor the general welfare. Congress could have used these funds to mitigate the impacts of the crisis by prioritizing additional funding for vaccine research, which is a constitutional application of this section. However, our leaders are falling folly to the mistakes of President Theodore Roosevelt.¹⁶ Roosevelt believed that, “the executive power was limited only by specific restrictions and prohibitions appearing in the Constitution or imposed by the Congress under its constitutional powers.” In other words, anything goes so long as the action is not explicitly prohibited, a rather unstable and exploitative interpretation of the Constitution. In contrast, President William Howard Taft maintained that all presidential powers must be traced to a specific authorization either in the Constitution or in an act of Congress.

What are the effects of this unfettered spending? Not only is the health of our economy at stake, but our framework of the Constitution is likewise in peril. If we consent to miscellaneous

¹⁴ Maharrey, Mike. “The Coronavirus Stimulus Bill Is Filled with Unconstitutional Programs: Mike Maharrey.” Tenth Amendment Center, 2020. <https://tenthamendmentcenter.com/2020/12/28/the-coronavirus-stimulus-bill-is-filled-with-unconstitutional-programs/>.

¹⁵ Maharrey, Mike. “The Coronavirus Stimulus Bill Is Filled with Unconstitutional Programs: Mike Maharrey.” Tenth Amendment Center, 2020. <https://tenthamendmentcenter.com/2020/12/28/the-coronavirus-stimulus-bill-is-filled-with-unconstitutional-programs/>.

¹⁶ “National Emergency Powers.” Congressional Research Service, 2021. <https://crsreports.congress.gov/product/details?prodcode=98-505>.

expenditures under the mindset that we pass bills to know what they contain, we will spend beyond our ability of repayment. The American people can only be taxed so much and under specific constitutional situations. Most Americans see a flagrant issue with our nation's leaders dishing out money to foreign countries in a time where we are expected to sign away our fundamental constitutional rights and submit to tyranny. None of the aforementioned expenditures are authorized by the enumerated powers of Article 1, Section 8. Bailing out airliners is not regulating commerce with foreign nations. The actions in these stimulus packages do not establish bankruptcy law or rules of naturalization, punish counterfeiting, establish postal services and roads, protect science and art by guaranteeing their rights, constitute tribunals inferior to the Supreme Court, punish piracy, or include any of the other enumerated powers in this section. Far too many political leaders abusively interpret the General Welfare Clause as a mean of deception and corruption. The fundamental reason Article 1, Section 8 states "herein" is to emphasize that the powers enumerated are exhaustive and comprehensive. Any action that is not explicitly authorized within these allowances is unconstitutional.

National Emergencies and the Second Amendment

A common tactic of totalitarian, radicalized regimes is to disarm its citizens. Without means to resist oppression, dictators abuse and suppress the civil and human rights of their subjects. The first step is to push for national firearm registries to determine who is armed and who is not. Next, the dictator may confiscate these firearms and execute their owners. The most infamous and frenzied Nazi attack on Jews was Kristallnacht, or the Night of Broken Glass.¹⁷ In order for their destruction and chaos to carry the desired calamity, the Nazis first confiscated firearms from Jews. On November 9, 1938, Hitler and Goebbels gave unambiguous orders: destroy all Jewish establishments, burn their synagogues, and show no mercy in executing resisters. The police would not intervene. On the following evening, the Nazis smashed, looted, and burned anything Jews held dear. Jews were forbidden from possessing any weapons of any type with a punishment of twenty years in a concentration camp for violators. How did this happen? The Weimar Republic passed a Firearm Law in 1928 that required comprehensive police records on all firearm owners. Hitler expanded this requirement ten years later. In conjunction with his manipulation of the Article 48 regarding national emergencies, Hitler was able to willfully disarm, persecute, and corral those he believed to be the enemies of Germany, which led to their genocide. Although World War II is decades behind us, those who seek to impose these identical measures hold the highest offices of our government today. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi chastised President Trump in February 2019 for his declaration of the Southern border as a national emergency in his efforts to expedite border construction.¹⁸ Pelosi stated,

Want to talk about a national emergency? Let's talk about today, the one year anniversary of another manifestation of the epidemic of gun violence in America.

¹⁷ Halbrook, Stephen. Registration: The Nazi Paradigm, 2001.
https://www.stephenhalbrook.com/registration_article/registration.html.

¹⁸ "Pelosi Claims Future President Could Use 'National Emergency' to Target Guns." NRA-ILA, 2019.
<https://www.nraila.org/articles/20190222/pelosi-claims-future-president-could-use-national-emergency-to-target-guns>.

That's a national emergency. Why don't you declare that emergency, Mr. President?

Not only is Speaker Pelosi grossly inaccurate in her characterization of gun violence as an epidemic, but she is aspiring to obtain the very levels of unconstrained power that encouraged mass genocide just 60 years ago. While the falsity of Pelosi's claim regarding gun violence is a separate matter for debate, Pelosi suggested in her comments that a Democratic president should declare gun violence a national emergency. While the National Emergencies Act grants a president the authority to declare a national emergency in order to obtain specialized statutory powers that are otherwise unavailable, 42 U.S.C. 5207 states that federal authorities are explicitly prohibited from pursuing firearms and their owners during national emergencies.¹⁹ Additionally, a 2007 Congressional Research Service report articulates, "With the exception of the habeas corpus clause, the Constitution makes no allowance for the suspension of any of its provisions during a national emergency." In light of such analysis, why are we consenting to the suspension of our civil liberties at any time, including during COVID-19? Even more concerning, President Biden is in favor of a national gun registry and gun buyback programs for "assault weapons."²⁰ He calls these guns and high-capacity magazines "weapons of war." He gives the American public an ultimatum: sell them to the government or register them under the National Firearms Act. Those who register will face a \$200 tax.²¹ Those in noncompliance will face ten years in federal prison and a potential fine. To register the nearly eighteen million AR-15s privately and lawfully owned in the nation, gun owners would be forced to cough up \$3.6 billion in taxes, excluding other "assault weapon" and high-capacity or standard magazine registrations. Every gun sale will require a background check. In order to do so, every serial number of each gun will be logged in a database with their owner's personal identifiable information. The government will know where every gun is at all times, which is not what our Founders intended.

President Biden fallaciously touts that his role in supporting the "assault weapon" ban in 1994 drastically impacted crime. However, the congressionally mandated study of the ban's efficacy found that the ban had no impact whatsoever on crime because the outlawed weapons were not used in an egregiously disproportionate number of gun murders.²² Additionally, rifles of any modification or type are only used in two percent of murders. When the ban was in effect, murder rates increased by 19.3 percent. The ban of "assault weapons" and high-capacity magazines had no conclusive effect on reducing mass shootings and violent crimes. As magazine and firearm ownership rises, total violent crime and murder have fallen to historic lows.

¹⁹ "Pelosi Claims Future President Could Use 'National Emergency' to Target Guns." NRA-ILA, 2019. <https://www.nraila.org/articles/20190222/pelosi-claims-future-president-could-use-national-emergency-to-target-guns>.

²⁰ "Joe Biden's Plan to End Gun Violence: Joe Biden for President." Joe Biden for President: Official Campaign Website, 2020. <https://joebiden.com/gunsafety/>.

²¹ "Biden to Impose \$200 Gun Tax." Americans for Tax Reform, 2020. <https://www.atr.org/biden-impose-200-gun-tax?amp>.

²² "'Assault Weapons': 'Large' Magazines." NRA-ILA, 2019. <https://www.nraila.org/get-the-facts/assault-weapons-large-magazines/>.

Magazines holding more than ten rounds are standard for handguns and rifles for self-defense. According to *District of Columbia v. Heller*, arms commonly used for defensive purposes are protected under the Second Amendment. However, one wonders what a totalitarian regime could do if it were not for these protections. Where, what and when is our breaking point?

The Naivety of Blind and Unconditional Obedience

The only method for the preservation of our republic is safeguarding our civil liberties from the clutches of tyranny. We must not only examine policies at face-value and prophesied intentions but also according to their real implications. There is a plethora of instances where we have trusted and found comfort in the advice of “medical professionals.” We have been misled by professionals before. The *Buck v. Bell* case of 1927 is a horrifying display of ignorance on the national stage wherein the Supreme Court affirmed the forced sterilization of women in the practice of eugenics.²³ In 1945, the *Korematsu* decision cited the *Buck* case as our nation moved to suspend the civil liberties of American citizens because of their ancestral background and the perceived risk of espionage on behalf of those ancestral compositions.²⁴ In 2020 and into 2021, the *Korematsu v. United States* decision has become our way of life. Our right to peaceable assembly, freedom of religion, and even the right to earn a living have been suspended indefinitely. We bend our knees to aggressive authorities.

Social psychologist Stanley Milgram examined the relation between authority and obedience.²⁵ In his infamous experiment, participants were instructed that that would either play the role of teacher or learner. The “teachers” were instructed to administer increasingly severe shocks to the “learner” for incorrect answers. The “learner” was an actor placed in a separate room who would react to shocks they never received with reactions ranging from grunts to screams and complaints of heart pain. The conclusion of the study revealed that as long as the authority in the room pressured the “teachers” to proceed with the shocks, sixty-five percent of the “teachers” proceeded to the maximum voltage level. The significance of the Milgram experiment is tremendous. First, we are reminded of the cowardice and sinfulness of man. We are fallible, depraved beings capable of redemption only through our Savior. Second, we must always question the intentions and effects of every instruction and policy that comes from authority in order to examine its intentions and consequences. We possess an epistemic duty to do so. Finally, we must be cognizant of the influences of our society. In times of intense pressure, we must cling to our virtues and support the wellbeing of our fellow man.

²³ “The Supreme Court Ruling That Led To 70,000 Forced Sterilizations.” NPR. NPR, 2016.
<https://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2016/03/07/469478098/the-supreme-court-ruling-that-led-to-70-000-forced-sterilizations#:~:text=In%201927%2C%20the%20U.S.%20Supreme,deemed%20to%20be%20%22feeblemin%20ded.%22>.

²⁴ “Facts and Case Summary - *Korematsu v. U.S.*” United States Courts. Accessed January 15, 2021.
<https://www.uscourts.gov/educational-resources/educational-activities/facts-and-case-summary-korematsu-v-us>.

²⁵ Encina, Gregorio. Milgram's Experiment on Obedience to Authority. University of California. Accessed January 15, 2021. <https://nature.berkeley.edu/ucce50/ag-labor/7article/article35.htm>.

COVID-19 illuminates the hazards of socialized medicine. It is important to understand that no government of any structure can grant every citizen what he or she needs in the quality, quantity, and timeliness that goods and services are needed. To affirm such a claim is to affirm that government is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent, a feat accomplishable only by God. The mandates proposed by public health officials from the CDC and WHO went largely unquestioned despite a lack of credible evidence to support them. The shutdowns across the nation for the COVID-19 pandemic have no evidence of efficacy in reducing the number of critical cases or mortality rates. In a study conducted by Adam McCann, there is no relationship between the stringency of shutdowns and the death rates of COVID-19, but there is a clear relationship between the severity of shutdowns and unemployment.²⁶ In John Gibson's study, he examines the efficacy of New Zealand's lockdowns. While there needed to be outstanding health benefits to offset the staggering loss of \$10 billion dollars in output, the ineffectiveness of the lockdowns suggest that the strict lockdowns of New Zealand did little to help and a lot to hurt.²⁷ According to Jonas Herby's examination, mandated behavioral restrictions accounted for only nine percent of the total effect on the pandemic's growth, while voluntary behavior accounted for ninety-one percent of the pandemic's growth change, excluding mask mandates and curfew.²⁸

A Path Forward

When crafting a comprehensive and effective strategy to counteract the economic, political, institutional, medical, and interpersonal damage confronting our beloved nation, we must acknowledge the vulnerability of our situation. COVID-19 has not only challenged the resolve of Americans but of our entire international infrastructure. The Constitution, which is a foundational document inspired by God to instruct and aid our leaders in times of crisis, was cast away and dismissed as antiquated in relation to our current crisis. We set the precedent that national emergencies can be utilized to fund foreign governments, enact ineffective shutdowns based on superficial to nonexistent evidence that destroy economic investment, and suppress civil liberties such as the right to peaceably assemble and the right to express our religious freedoms. Our political leaders must be held accountable. We must not forget the glaring abuses of power as evidenced by unconstitutional executive actions, outrageous legislative budgetary appropriations, and the dismissal of the people by those elected to serve us. Unconstitutional orders of discrimination against communities of faith across the nation that resemble those of New York and Nevada must be abandoned. We should conduct an independent and comprehensive analysis as to the efficacy of these government shutdowns to determine their necessity. Most crucially, our nation must comprehend the dangers of making the same mistakes of entrusting fallible men with the conditions of our safety, security, health, and deliverance from disaster, as these policies contribute to the benefit of a few and to the detriment of many. If our political leaders continue to degrade public confidence in the competency and capability of our republic with their deceitful and unscrupulous slights of hand, our political, economic, and social

²⁶ McCann, Adam, and Jim Smith. "States with the Fewest Coronavirus Restrictions." WalletHub, 2021. <https://wallethub.com/edu/states-coronavirus-restrictions/73818>.

²⁷ Gibson, John. "Government Mandated Lockdowns Do Not Reduce Covid-19 Deaths: Implications for Evaluating the Stringent New Zealand Response." *New Zealand Economic Papers*, 2020, 1–12. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00779954.2020.1844786>.

²⁸ Herby, Jonas, A First Literature Review: Lockdowns Only Had a Small Effect on COVID-19, 2021. <https://ssrn.com/abstract=3764553>.

excellence that we fight each day to preserve will rapidly devolve into hatred, political apathy, and anarchy.

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