

MSNBC's *The ReidOut*

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7:00:27 p.m.

24 seconds

JOY REID: We begin *The ReidOut* tonight with the COVID crisis that – it really feels like it's spiraling out of control. Cases are surging throughout the country and hospitals are understaffed and overflowing. And this is a crisis that could have been prevented. But instead, it's being driven by a minority of Americans who are refusing to get vaccinated or, in some cases, to take any precautions to stop the spread.

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7:04:28 p.m.

1 minute and 13 seconds

DR. LOUANNA WOODWARD: We are doing what we can do here at the medical center. We announced a couple of weeks ago that until the vaccine is approved and completely out from under the EUA, that we have a phased-in approach requiring that our employees and students are vaccinated or wear an N95 mask. Once the vaccine is out from under the EUA and fully approved from the FDA, then we will require it, just like we do with a lot of other vaccinations. But it is tough. It is a tough sell in this state.

REID: You know, normally, people also have a really strong feeling about staying alive, right, and keeping their kids alive.

WOODWARD: Absolutely.

REID: I honestly –and I don't mean to say that to be facetious. I cannot understand the sort of vehemence and rage around being told just do this thing to keep yourself safe, wear a mask or get vaccinated. At least wear a mask. As a – you know, as somebody that – you sit on the medical side of the world, can you understand why someone would take such a hardcore, angry opposition to staying safe and alive?

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7:06:09 p.m.

22 seconds

WOODWARD: We have failed as actually a country, really, to unite against a common thread. We have failed to do that. The concept that people would not want to wear a mask just to protect themselves, their families, their patients, and everybody in their community is beyond what I can understand.

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7:06:47 p.m.

4 minutes and 44 seconds

REID: Breaking earlier tonight, the Supreme Court refused to block Indiana University's requirement that students must be vaccinated to attend classes in the fall. It's the first legal test of a vaccine mandate to come before the court. Just as Amy Coney Barrett – the justice in charged to that region – denied the case, that none of the other justices dissented. And with me is Charlie Sykes, editor-at-large to the

Bulwark and MSNBC columnist. And, Charlie, you know, that is surprising to me. This is a very arch-conservative court. Amy Coney Barrett, this is just her region, so it's not like it was a full court deciding it. But the fact that no one dissented, are we reaching a point now where what we're going to need to turn this around are mandates that then go to court and the people who were pushing against the mandates lose and that's the only way that we are going to be able to sort of save people's lives against their will, I guess?

CHARLIE SYKES: I think so. I think that's exactly what has to happen and, look, I think what the Supreme Court is also sending a very, very clear signal that there's nothing unconstitutional about a public health mandate like this. There is a long history of it. These have not been controversial in the past. This is common sense and what they are pushing back against is this know nothing revolution that you're seeing in places like Texas and Alabama and Mississippi and Florida where we're seeing that disinformation has consequences, that political demagoguery has consequences, and it's a grim toll. So, yes, this is a conservative court, but it's distancing itself from this kind of tribal we have one page in our playbook policy, politics, that we're seeing from people like Greg Abbott, or the governor of Mississippi, or the governor of Florida.

REID: And I should note that this is also a court that was much more open to the idea of allowing religious gatherings. I think that was also an Amy Coney Barrett thing to say, you know, that you couldn't restrict religious gatherings on the basis of COVID, so it's kind of a turnaround. Right now, the governor of Florida, Ron DeSantis, he's left – he's leaving Florida this weekend to go do a fundraiser on a sheep farm in Nevada. That's what he thinks is important for himself to do. You have got lawsuits in Texas, in which Travis County, a judge has batted down the governor of Texas, and this is a tweet that Governor Abbott tweeted yesterday, any school district, public university or local government that decides to defy his order, which prohibits government entities from mandating masks, will be taken to court. And he's saying personal responsibility, personal responsibility. Well, this is what the Travis County judge said, governor, with all due respect, the threat of being sued is nothing compared with the threat of kids getting sick and dying. I will not let that happen on my watch. I'll ask you to join me in that sense. I mean, the reality is, these governors are taking a stance in favor of death. And I don't understand the calculation to do that.

SYKES: Well, I think, in some ways, they are stuck. They are all in on treating this as if it's a culture war issue rather than a public health issue. And keep in mind that there is something of an outlier. We are not seeing this from the Republican governors of places like Maryland or Ohio or Utah, all of whom have done the responsible things, but those guys are not running for president, so, Ron DeSantis has put his 2024 campaign ahead of everything, and right now, he says, okay, this is what the base wants, I'm raising money off of this, you know, selling t-shirts, making fun of Dr. Fauci, and he has bet his own political future and the lives of potentially thousands of people in Florida that this is a political winner. I also find it extraordinary that they are willing to double down at this particular point, that at the same time they are begging for ventilators because the number of hospitalizations is so high, they are still trying to use the power of the state to tell private companies, and, by the way, that's mind blowing to me.

REID: Yes.

SYKES: Private companies, you can't make decisions about what's best for your employees and your customers. These are conservative Republicans who say they are for small government and for freedom

and yet they are trying to deny people, entities, organizations the freedom to take steps that will save the lives of their own constituencies.

REID: Yeah.

SYKES: So, political tribalism is a hell of a drug.

REID: Yeah. It's the same ethos of big, big government that says they are going to tell students what they can read in school, they're going to go from the big government and mandate what books to ban and they're going to go in and say that you can't even protect your school or your private business.

(....)

7:11:58 p.m.

2 minutes and 10 seconds

REID: And this is where the planned campaign for 2022 meets the reality of COVID in this year, right? They wanted to run, the Republicans, on border scare and brown scare. COVID has interrupted their plans. And so, they decided to merge them together. Let me just put up a border map just for those of you who – you know, this audience knows, but there is no connection between Florida and the southern border that [Jim Jordan] is squealing about, right? So, the original plan was to do border scare and crime scare and now, they have got to somehow find a way to fit COVID into it. Your thoughts?

SYKES: Well, this is again the playbook. This is back to their comfort zone, which is to blame the problems on the border, on disease-infested immigrants. They have been playing this particular card since Donald Trump came down the escalator and said that, you know, the Mexican rapists were coming, not bringing their own. So, in some ways, they returned to their comfort zone because now they can be alarmed about something. They have downplayed the significance of the coronavirus. They have pretended it's no big deal. But now suddenly they have something they can be angry about, and outraged about, which is these immigrants bringing it in. As you point out, there is no border in Florida. It does not stop Ron DeSantis from demagoguing this issue, from sending out fundraising letters. But also, I just want to point out how incoherent the argument is. If, in fact, we are facing this dire threat of hundreds of thousands of diseased immigrants coming across the border, wouldn't that be an argument for more aggressive vaccinations making sure that everybody is vaccinated? You know, how can you on the one hand say that this is this dire threat of disease coming here and continue to say, yes, but I am not having any mask mandates or vaccine mandates?

REID: Yeah, stop. Stop trying to make sense. Just stopping making – I mean, I didn't even get to Marjorie Taylor Greene saying, I mean, you're going to die at some point anyway. Like that's your argument? I mean, you're going to die of something, might as well be COVID. These are nonsensical, homicidal arguments against their own voters. I don't get it. It's bizarre. Charlie Sykes, I always appreciate you coming in and trying to make sense of the nonsensical.