

Affirmative Case

“The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few.” Because I agree with senior science officer Spock, I must affirm the resolution, **Resolved: Public health concerns justify compulsory immunization.**

In order to clarify today’s round, I would like to offer the following definitions from the American Heritage Dictionary.

Public Health - The science and practice of protecting and improving the health of a community, as by preventative medicine, health education, control of communicable diseases, application of sanitary measures, and monitoring of environmental hazards.

Concerns - A matter that relates to or affects one.

Justify - To demonstrate or prove to be just, right, or valid.

Compulsory - Obligatory; required.

Immunization – To produce immunity in, as by inoculation.

Inoculation - The act or an instance of inoculating, especially the introduction of an antigenic substance or vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

My Value in today’s debate will be **Societal Welfare**, which is the well being of a society in matters of health, safety, order, and economics. Societal welfare is the paramount value in today’s debate because we are being asked whether or not health concerns, which must be resolved in order to achieve Societal Welfare, justify

compulsory immunization. My value Criterion for today's debate will be upholding John Locke's **Social Contract Theory**, which lays out a basic agreement between the citizens and the government. In the Social Contract theory, citizens sacrifice their rights to the government, and the government protects its citizens. If the Social Contract theory is being upheld, then a society is best being protected from danger, and thus, Societal Welfare is being achieved.

Contention 1: Vaccines are able to consistently protect Society from disease.

According to Stanley Plotkin, in the fifth edition of the medical journal compendium Vaccines, there are currently **29 diseases that are vaccine preventable**, ranging from smallpox, to rabies, to pneumonia, even anthrax. These diseases all have effective, licensed vaccines that render the majority of the recipient population immune to the specific disease. The simple fact that these diseases can be completely prevented by immunization in theory leads logically leads to the conclusion that vaccines should be effective at dealing with diseases. In practice however, vaccines have **shown** themselves to be reliable methods of dealing with public health concerns. Polio, for example, is a debilitating disease that left many with paralysis, which was sometimes fatal; obviously a public health concern. In 1985, the Pan American Health Organization, proposed a goal of eradicating the polio virus in all of the Americas, and in 1994, they announced that they had succeeded, claiming **"3 years had passed since the occurrence of the last case of poliomyelitis associated with wild poliovirus isolation in the Americas"**. Effectively, by providing the American governments with the vaccine, and enacting compulsory vaccination programs in all of the American countries, the polio virus was completely eradicated in all of the Americas. Because the Polio vaccine succeeded in literally eradicating all cases of the Polio virus in the Americas, vaccines can be trusted to protect society from public health concerns and dangerous diseases.

Contention 2: Compulsory immunization upholds the Social Contract Theory by achieving Herd Immunity.

Sub point A: Compulsory immunization achieves Herd Immunity.

According to Medical Doctor Walter Orenstein, Former Assistant Surgeon General, and Former Director of the National Immunization Program Centers from Disease Control and Prevention, **"In addition to protecting the**

vaccinated individual from developing a potentially serious disease, vaccines help protect the community by reducing the spread of infectious agents. For example, most diseases spread from person to person, if a high enough proportion of the population is immunized, transmission may be interrupted in the community, thus providing protection to those who are not themselves immunized. This indirect protection is often called Herd Immunity.” Herd Immunity is effectively a special kind of protection that offers immunity to individuals that have not been directly vaccinated and immunized to a disease. In order to achieve this herd immunity, a “herd” must vaccinate on average between 70 and 90 percent of the total population, but according to Dr. Orenstein, **“disease usually disappears before immunization levels reach 100%, as has been seen with smallpox and poliomyelitis.”** According to Zsofia Meszner MD, of the National Institute of Child Health of Budapest, **“Nearly every example of government required vaccinations have achieved herd immunity...”** Examples of government run vaccination programs that successfully achieved herd immunity include smallpox, poliomyelitis, tuberculosis, rubella, measles, mumps, and the tetanus toxoid. If an immunization program can achieve herd immunity, the health interests of the society are best upheld, and because compulsory programs almost always achieve herd immunity, compulsory immunization can be considered a reliable method of protecting the health interests of society. Thus, through compulsory immunization programs, the government can best protect society, which upholds the Social Contract theory, and thus, best ensures Societal Welfare.

Sub point B: Compulsory immunization protects those who cannot medically receive vaccinations from those who are able to, but are choosing not to.

According to Medical Doctor and professor of Pediatrics in The Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia Paul A. Offit, **“The issue of indirect protection of non-immunes is central to community immunity discussions. Such protection applies to important segments of society: to children too young to be vaccinated, to immunocompromised persons who cannot make an adequate immune response, to persons with contraindications to vaccination, to persons who fail to mount an adequate immune response, etc.”** Effectively, herd immunity provides protection to those individuals who, for medical reasons, cannot safely or purposefully receive vaccinations. If a society does not achieve herd immunity however, this protection will be absent, placing all of these individuals at risk. Thus, by utilizing compulsory immunization to achieve herd immunity, a society will

be capable of protecting even those who cannot medically receive vaccinations, a protection that cannot exist without herd immunity. If we allow individuals to potentially make the choice against being immunized, we are allowing those individuals to subject those who cannot be immunized to an unnecessary risk. To do so would not uphold the government's contractual obligation to do everything within its power to protect its citizens from each other, and thus, Societal Welfare would not be achieved. By initiating a compulsory immunization program, the government becomes more capable of providing herd immunity, and thus, the government becomes more capable of protecting those individuals in society who cannot make the choice to protect themselves.

In conclusion, John Locke's social contract theory requires the government protect its citizens from one another, and if the government is protecting citizens from one another, then it is achieving societal welfare. Thus, in the interest of achieving societal welfare, and protecting the portion of society that *cannot* protect itself, the government is not only justified, but **required** to utilize compulsory immunization to protect society from public health concerns. The affirmative has illustrated that vaccines are beneficial both in theory **and** in practice, by providing warranted claims proving diseases' eradication as a result of vaccines. The affirmative has also illustrated that herd immunity, necessary to protect the immunocompromised individuals in society, can most assuredly be achieved through compulsory immunization. It is for these reasons that public health concerns justify compulsory immunization.

I now stand open for cross examination and points of clarification.