

# OPINION

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Listen to the teachers and students, and wait

A letter from Ms. Sachs asked why teacher and students of the Bainbridge School District “are told to go back to the classroom while the pandemic is still raging . . . when mass immunizations are just around the corner”? Good question.

In another letter, a student, Ms. Cantwell, calls the return to in-class teaching a “reckless gamble with human lives.”

Absolutely, but who made this decision? The folks who do the actual teaching, or the district bureaucrats, school board members and the superintendent? The very people one does not normally see in the classroom?

Where I taught, superintendents, district administrators and school board members were like the Olympian gods. Invisible. They must have been since I have never once seen any of the many directors of teaching and learning or a superintendent or school board member in my class room. Just for a chat. Just to learn from students and teachers how things were going or not going.

So, maybe Bainbridge is different; but who decided to send the Bainbridge students and teachers back to school with immunization just around the corner?

I realize, this was and still is a tough time for all of us, especially for parents and kids; but, let’s not take chances when we are so close to immunizing everybody. All students and staff must be vaccinated before school opens.

*James Behrend, Bainbridge Island*

### PCHS offers an encouraging start to vaccinations

A big shout-out to Peninsula Community Health Services in Bremerton for their fantastic roll-out of Covid vaccinations for those of us who are eligible!

My experience disclosed a well-organized operation and in the space of less than two hours I got my first shot and a scheduled second dose. Well done, Peninsula! Some of our donations will be going there, and I invite others to do so as well.

*Rick Kunz, Poulsbo*

### Vaccine process was a positive experience

I was recently administered the Covid vaccine at St. Anthony Medical Center in Gig Harbor. I can only say how organized, efficient and effective the whole experience was. This was America operating at its best with competent and talented people executing on a mission.

This is exactly what America needs after nine months of federal government chaos, confusion and incompetence. Thank you St. Anthony’s and any others involved in that effort. Great job.

*Mike Nicosia, South Kitsap*

### Opinions opposing nuclear weapons are insulting

I am compelled to write in opposition to this newspaper’s policy of running full page ads opposing the official policy of the United States to deter nuclear aggression by any and all nation states, which poses a clear and present danger to our government system and our way of life.

These advertisements, if not actually treasonable, insult the zeal and dedication to duty of thousands of men and women who have spent their military careers for decades, sacrificing precious time with families and children, to be on the front lines. It is because of them that no enemy, no matter how strong or emotionally deranged, has even thought about launching a nuclear weapon against our homeland.

My complaint is not against those who author these advertisements, whose rights are protected by the Bill of Rights, but against those in the Sun staff, and ultimately the editor himself, who make the decision to publish them. Shame on you!

*Conrad Pylar, Port Orchard*

### Vote yes on the South Kitsap school levy

We’re voting “YES!” on the South Kitsap School District Levy renewal. It funds programs and positions that aren’t funded by the state’s definition of basic education. It funds projects that are necessary for physical and mental safety of our children and community. The levy funds 100 percent of athletics, 100 percent of performing and visual arts, 100 percent of band and music programs, 15 percent of Transportation costs. It funds school nurses, librarians, counselors, resource officers, custodians, special education programs, etc. that are all necessary for the health and well-being of our students.

It’s easy to complain that the state should fund all these programs and positions, but the reality is that the community is required to fund the difference or do without. If the levy fails these programs and positions are gone. If you feel the school district hasn’t been transparent enough or hasn’t communicated where the money has been spent, then contact Superintendent Winter or your School Board and get the information you need to be informed. The South Kitsap community and City of Port Orchard deserve a school district that educates our children and keeps them safe. This levy renewal, not a new tax, does this.

Vote “yes” on the South Kitsap School District Levy renewal!

*Jay and Susan Rosapepe, Port Orchard*



## Why are so many hesitant on vaccines?

**Timothy Callaghan and Matt Motta**

Special to Kitsap Sun  
USA TODAY NETWORK

Today, more Americans hope to receive a COVID-19 vaccine than current vaccine supply will allow. Consequently, although President Joe Biden’s initial promise to dole out 100 million vaccine doses in 100 days would require a ramp-up in vaccine allocation, some consider the promise to be insufficient to meet current levels of demand and put the pandemic’s spread into decline.

The current mismatch between vaccine demand and supply, however, may be short-lived. Despite concerns about lagging vaccine allocation for front-line health care workers and other vulnerable groups, health experts are optimistic that public demand for a COVID-19 vaccine will remain high in coming months as more vaccine doses become available.

While it is clear that many political leaders expect public demand for a coronavirus vaccine to be strong, whether or not expectations can live up to reality is an open question. In fact, there is some evidence to suggest instead that large segments of both the public and health care workers do not intend to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

Figuring out whether or not some people are less likely to get vaccinated – and their reasons for not getting vaccinated – can help political leaders and health professionals better anticipate vaccine demand. If some social, political and other demographic groups are more (or less) likely to intend to get vaccinated than others, demand for a vaccine may be higher (or lower) in vaccine distribution networks that primarily serve vaccine-hesitant groups.

Additionally, understanding why some individuals are more likely to refuse vaccination than others can help inform health communication efforts to increase vaccine uptake. For example, if some Americans intend to refuse to get vaccinated due to concerns that the vaccine is not safe, health communicators can target these groups with easy-to-understand information about how scientists determined that the vaccine is safe.

In a recent peer-reviewed study, we provide important insight into what public demand for a coronavirus vaccine could actually look like, once most Americans have the opportunity to get vaccinated. Just as important, we detail reasons certain Americans do not intend to get vaccinated.

### Some Americans more likely to get vaccinated

We studied Americans’ COVID-19 vaccination intentions in a large, demographically representative online survey of 5,009 U.S. adults, conducted in June 2020. We measured vaccination intentions by asking respondents whether or not they would pursue getting vaccinated for the coronavirus if a COVID-19 vaccine became available.

Our study found that almost a third (31.1%) of respondents did not intend to pursue vaccination. This is concerning, given that recent epidemiological estimates suggest that up to 70% of Americans must become immune to COVID-19 in order to put the pandemic’s spread into decline.

We also found strong differences in vaccination intention between key demographic groups. Notably, we found that 35.7% of women (vs. 26.3% of men), 42.9% of Black people (vs. 28.6% of white people), and 37.8% of conservatives (vs. 33.4% of independents and 24.1% of liberals) intended to forgo vaccination.

### Why will some people refuse a COVID-19 vaccine?

Our study provides new insights into the reasons that some Americans do not intend to get vaccinated against COVID-19. We found that concerns about the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine were the most consistent reasons for forgoing vaccination. We also found that portions of the American public did not intend to pursue vaccination because they lack health insurance, lack the financial resources they believe they need to be vaccinated or because they have already had COVID-19.

Our study also found considerable evidence that the reasons for not vaccinating were not the same for everyone. For example, women were more likely than men to say they would forgo vaccination due to concerns about safety and effectiveness. Additionally, we found that Black people were more likely to skip vaccination than white people due to perceived safety and effectiveness issues as well as concerns related to the cost of vaccinating and a lack of health insurance.

### What this all means for vaccine uptake

Together, our findings point to two key takeaways as the U.S. pushes to rapidly vaccinate its population against COVID-19. First, political leaders and public health experts need to recognize that what appears to be considerable public demand for the COVID-19 vaccine right now may be more modest in the coming months, as more Americans have the opportunity to get vaccinated. In its place, experts will be faced with the new challenge of convincing hesitant groups to get vaccinated in order to reach herd immunity and end the pandemic.

Second, our results demonstrate that in these efforts to vaccinate the hesitant, a one-size-fits-all approach to health communications will be insufficient. While health communications aimed at emphasizing the safety and effectiveness of the vaccine will be important, for some groups, it will be just as important to emphasize that Americans can be vaccinated against COVID-19 for free, regardless of insurance status. Developing these communications and identifying appropriate messengers to deliver this information will be vital to stopping the pandemic.

*Timothy Callaghan is an assistant professor at the Texas A&M University School of Public Health, and Matt Motta is an assistant professor of political science at Oklahoma State University. They wrote this for The Conversation. Read more at theconversation.com.*

## LETTERS POLICY

Letters should be 250 words or shorter, neatly typewritten. The Kitsap Sun reserves the right to reject, edit or condense all letters. Mass submissions are not accepted and writers are generally limited to one letter a month. All letters must include the writer’s first name and (for our verification) address and daytime phone number.

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