

The Delray Democrat

New Profiles in Courage Confirm The Time for Civil Disobedience Is Now¹

June Sandra Neal

*"I became convinced that noncooperation with evil is
as much a moral obligation as is cooperation with good."*

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Florida's government's failure to protect its citizens is evil. Fortunately, we are witnessing acts of civil disobedience that call out to the rest of us.

- In the early morning dark of August 23, dozens of doctors and hospital CEOs from across Palm Beach County rallied to protest people failing to get Covid vaccinations, a result of Donald Trump's early marginalization of the threat to protect his presidency. As the light came up, their bright white coats and blue scrubs were eye-catching, their pleas acute. "We are in a real state of emergency...exhausted and frustrated," because intensive care units are full and clinics and doctors' offices are overwhelmed. It's unusual (and often proscribed) for groups of doctors to speak so forcefully, but they couldn't continue watching people suffer and die unnecessarily.
- In August, ten county school boards, representing more than 52% of the state's school children, defied Governor DeSantis' order to prohibit mask mandates in schools, despite his threats to withhold funding.
- His actions, rubber-stamped by his Republican-appointed parrots on the Florida Board of Education, were so immoral, so dismissive of science and common sense, that the educators were called to civil disobedience.
- And Mike Burke, only weeks in his new post as PBC Superintendent of Schools, responded to DeSantis' charge that the mask mandate violated state law saying, "No, it does not."

A parents' lawsuit was pending but waiting wasn't an option. School opened on August 10, and, as of August 20, Florida had more children hospitalized with Covid-19 than any other state, "...averaging 54 new admissions a day over the past week," according to the Centers for Disease Control. Children under 12 aren't even eligible for inoculations.

The protestors won a first step. On August 26, a circuit court judge ruled that school boards have the authority to order mask mandates, although parents can opt out for medical reasons. DeSantis will appeal. Nonetheless, the doctors' and educators' actions should be a North Star, guiding us to refuse subordination to egregiously unjust laws.

¹ *The Delray Democrat*, [September 2021](#), page 1.

Since Trump's fascism took root, Americans have suffered a massive assault on our laws and our traditions, which had been as concretized within the American ethos as firmly as our Constitutional amendments. Trump stirred up the sediment of racial and ethnic superiority and blackened both science and reason in an effort to downplay the virus he feared would mar his presidency. Ironically, he'll be known forever for aiding the death of hundreds of thousands of Americans.

DeSantis, salivating for votes from the Trump base, vowed to brook no resistance. And Florida Education Commissioner Richard Corcoran, DeSantis' alter ego, said "We cannot have government officials pick and choose what laws they want to follow."

Oh yes, we can.

Chapters in America's autobiography jump out: The Boston Tea Party, the Abolitionists and the thousands of college students who ended the war in Viet Nam. And Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s model of non-violent civil disobedience forever changed marginalized people's consciousness of their power.

We'd best draw on it now; the Republicans have already jettisoned basic predicates of American democracy, starting with usurping the powers of the federal and state governments for their own benefit, then violence to subjugate the Constitution. January 6 was only their first salvo.

Right now, the virus precludes the demonstrations and rallies that have been so successful in the past. But there is much that citizens can do.

We can boycott the organizations that donate to the campaigns of DeSantis and Senators Rubio and Scott. Tell them the reason for your boycott. Here are some links:

Florida Department of State:

<https://dos.elections.myflorida.com/campaign-finance/contributions/>

Federal Elections Commission (FEC)

<https://www.fec.gov/introduction-campaign-finance/how-to-research-public-records/individual-contributions/>

Transparency USA, Friends of Ron DeSantis (or any other name)

<https://www.transparencyusa.org/fl/pac/friends-of-ron-desantis-70275-pac>

Open Secrets

<https://www.opensecrets.org>

Also, demand that the State Board of Education members stand up to DeSantis' mask orders and the rest of his un-American laws. Remind them that the issue of school board salaries may be on the 2022 ballot. And that you vote.

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