

There Isn't a Coronavirus 'Second Wave' – Yet



By Sean McCormick

On June 16, the Wall Street Journal published an op-ed written by Vice President Pence, titled, "[There Isn't a Coronavirus 'Second Wave.'](#)" As Dr. Anthony S. Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, feels the United States hasn't reached the end of the [first wave](#), the article's initial assertion is technically correct, but dangerously dismissive.

Pence's column has two main themes: the media is misleading the American public by using scare tactics, and the Trump Administration is winning the fight against the coronavirus. Based on the [grim tone](#) of Friday's Coronavirus Task Force briefing (which Pence is the chair of) – a briefing that hasn't occurred in almost two months – the U.S. isn't going to be seeing a checkered flag anytime soon.

Pence's op-ed is a rosy status report that attempts to illustrate how the Trump Administration is on top of providing leadership, medical supplies, testing and vaccines – all while keeping the hyperbolic media in its place.

This column feels like it was intended for one specific reader in mind – one who is not particularly keen on reading. There are two separate instances where Pence obsequiously acknowledges and praises the leadership of President Trump, whose recent “leadership” includes him urging his staff to slow down [coronavirus testing](#). “By having more tests, we have more cases,” the President said.

Pence strongly condemns the COVID-19 coverage. “The media has tried to scare the American people every step of the way,” he wrote. Pence painting “the media” as fearmongers with such a porous and broad brush without naming any names or providing a single specific example negates his premise.

The media didn’t [drag its feet](#) in acknowledging there was a coronavirus problem. The media didn’t show up at the [Mayo Clinic](#) without a mask. The media didn’t ask scientists on live television whether inserting disinfectant into the body might clear up coronavirus – prompting household cleaner manufacturers to rapidly [create disclaimers](#) instructing the public to not ingest their products. The media didn’t urge governors to recklessly reopen their states’ [churches](#), [schools](#) and [economies](#) as quickly as possible.

Pence claims that “more than half of states are actually seeing cases decline or remain stable,” yet, in [17 states](#) hospitalizations have increased. Texas Medical Center in Houston currently has 100% of their regular intensive care unit [beds occupied](#). New York is currently requiring Texans who visit to [quarantine](#) for two weeks.

Pence also took a moment to boast about all the personal protective equipment that the administration helped deliver through [Project Airbridge](#) – yet the actual number is only around [7% of what he claimed](#). Pence touted, “more than 143 million N95 masks, 598 million surgical and procedural masks, 20 million eye and face shields, 265 million gowns and coveralls, and 14 billion gloves,” had been provided.

According to a recent [FEMA report](#), there were only 1.5 million N95 masks, 113.4 million surgical and procedural masks, 2.5 million face shields, 50.9 million gowns and 937 million gloves delivered.

Pence's prediction that, "we are well on our way to having a viable vaccine by the fall," is [misleading](#). While there are vaccine candidates like Moderna that are currently engaged in [Phase III trials](#), it is unlikely any of them will be available for mass consumption this fall.

"It is not possible to have a vaccine by fall or winter that has gone through the usual safety testing. Speed is a tradeoff with safety," said Dr. Greg Poland, who is the director of the Vaccine Research Group at the Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., in an [interview](#) with WebMD.

The vice president made sure to crowbar in a pander to the American public. "The American people have stepped up and made great personal sacrifices to protect the health and safety of our nation. And it's because of their embrace of social-distancing guidelines that all 50 states have begun to reopen in a safe and responsible manner," he wrote.

As we've seen many images of [Americans doing the exact opposite](#) – some of the early-opening states like [Texas](#) are already rolling back a few of their business protocols – it's obvious the Trump Administration's "[do as we say, not as we do](#)" approach to following CDC guidelines is not working.

Pence claimed, "we've saved lives," but failed to acknowledge the 125,709 (as of this writing) U.S. [COVID-19-related fatalities](#). We are currently doubling Brazil, a country of over 212 million people, in both confirmed cases and deaths. Pence also overlooked the 40 million-plus Americans who have [filed for unemployment](#) on the Trump Administration's watch, whose benefits are about to be [drastically reduced](#) at the end of July.

Vice President Pence's lopsided, feel-good propaganda is irresponsible at best. As the chair of the Coronavirus Task Force, it is his duty to provide the American public with the best information available, not to make baseless claims against the Fourth Estate while placing a happy-face sticker on his own report card. His assertion that "we are winning the fight against the invisible enemy," feels months premature – unless by "winning" he means accumulating the world's most confirmed cases and the most coronavirus-related deaths.

There won't be a coronavirus 'second wave' if we can't get off the first one.