

Will Republican political resistance to the COVID-19 vaccine mutate into broader vaccine hesitancy?

In recent years, outbreaks of vaccine-preventable diseases, spurred by low vaccination rates in children, emerged in wealthy, liberal places.... But while the public narrative focused on these left-wing enclaves, they were far from the only regions affected by outbreaks of vaccine-preventable disease: [Conservative communities of Orthodox Jews](#), some of whom also reject vaccines, have also seen spikes in cases, for example.

And polls over the past two decades have consistently found Republicans are just as likely as Democrats to hold vaccine-hesitant views. So while the right-wing resistance to the COVID-19 vaccines may feel like an about-face for who is anti-vax in America, both sides of the political divide were always there — but now one side's fringe views have slipped into its mainstream.

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[I]t's possible that Republican resistance to the COVID-19 vaccine could mutate into vaccine hesitancy more generally, if one's political identity demands resistance.

"I'm worried that the politicization could threaten the social consensus [currently] in favor of vaccination," said Brendan Nyhan, a professor of government at Dartmouth College. "If we start to see attitudes towards vaccines become closely linked to partisanship and ideology, we could see a polarization over vaccination that would threaten herd immunity on a whole series of diseases over time."

[**This is an excerpt. Read the original post here.**](#)