

'I found my people': The path some parents travel to become anti-vaxxers

They waved signs that read "Defeat the mandates" and "No vaccines." They chanted "Protect our kids" and "Our kids, our choice."

Almost everyone in the crowd of more than three dozen was a parent. And as they protested on a recent Friday in the Bay Area suburb of Orinda, Calif., they had the same refrain: They were there for their children.

Most had never been to a political rally before. But after seeing their children [isolated](#) and despondent early in [the coronavirus pandemic](#), they despaired, they said. On Facebook, they found other worried parents who sympathized with them. They shared notes and online articles — [many of them misleading](#) — about the reopening of schools and the efficacy of vaccines and masks. Soon, those issues crowded out other concerns.

"I wish I'd woken up to this cause sooner," said one protester, Lisa Longnecker, 54, who has a 17-year-old son. "But I can't think of a single more important issue. It's going to decide how I vote."

Ms. Longnecker and her fellow objectors are part of a potentially destabilizing new movement: parents who joined the anti-vaccine and anti-mask cause during the pandemic, narrowing their political beliefs to a single-minded obsession over those issues

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"I found my people," [mother Sarah] Levy said. While she had been an independent, she said she found common ground with Republicans "who understood that for us, worse than the virus, was having our kid trapped at home and out of school."

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