



NIH chief cheers on vaccine mandates for private sector, federal employees amid spreading protests

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Businesses requiring customers to get the COVID-19 vaccine is "a good thing" and would help bring an end to the pandemic, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Francis Collins said Sunday.

Collins was asked by CNN's Jake Tapper if it would be good for businesses to require customers to be vaccinated against COVID-19. "As a public health person who wants to see this pandemic end, yes," Collins replied. "I think anything we can do to encourage reluctant folks to get vaccinated because they'll want to be part of these public events, that's a good thing."

A New York City restaurant group will require adult customers to be vaccinated to sit indoors, and The Broadway League will also require customers to be vaccinated and wear masks to attend performances.

Walmart is implementing a COVID-19 vaccine mandate for its corporate employees, and Disney is requiring salaried and non-union workers to get vaccinated, the Epoch Times reported.

"I'm delighted to see employers like Disney and Walmart coming out and asking their staff now to be vaccinated," Collins told Tapper. "I'm glad to see the president has said all federal employees — I oversee NIH, with 40,000 people — need to also get vaccinated or, if they're not, to get regular testing, which is inconvenient.

"All of those steps, I think, are in the right direction. But I think maybe that's what it will take for some of those who have still been a little reluctant to say, 'Okay, it's time.' The data will support

that decision. They are making the right choice for their own safety. But sometimes it takes a nudge."

GOP governors Ron DeSantis of Florida and Tate Reeves of Mississippi have banned COVID-19 vaccine passports in their states, as has Montana. Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Georgia, Indiana, Idaho, Iowa, North Dakota, South Carolina, South Dakota, Texas, and Wyoming have also joined Florida and Mississippi in banning vaccine passports, according to Vanity Fair.

A list regarding vaccine passport legislation in all 50 states can be found here.

Experts at the Cato Institute and ACLU have also expressed concern over vaccine passports. The World Health Organization's position is that vaccine passports for international travel should not be required.

There have been protests across the world against vaccine passports, including in Paris, where thousands of people demonstrated against a "health pass" required to patronize restaurants and other places under a new law passed by the French Parliament.