

On August 25, 2021, the Cattaraugus County Legislature passed a resolution declaring that they recognize that government is to be limited and the people free from unnecessary and arbitrary governmental overreach and intrusions. The Resolution ended by stating: “RESOLVED, that the Cattaraugus County Legislature hereby declares Cattaraugus County, New York, a Constitutional County, unwavering in their commitment to protect Constitutional rights.”

In these days in which freedom loving folks are often treated as if there is something wrong with them, this was a moment of success and celebration. In these days in which liberty is so often despised by the very people who have benefited the most from it, this was a moment of victory.

The big question is: What does this resolution mean? At this point, the resolution is symbolic. It is a first step, not the last one, in a long walk back to the liberties we inherited as American citizens. Thus, in many ways the answer to this important question lies with us, the People. Will “We the People” do our part in participating in the process? Will we stay informed and speak up to express to our County Legislators the need to take the resolution to the next level: nullification of mandates that are unconstitutional and that fail to pass the “strict scrutiny” test required when liberties are infringed? Will we – with peaceful integrity and thoughtfulness – be courageous enough to refuse to comply with mandates that assault the boundaries of Constitutional restraint of governmental authority? Whether this resolution remains symbolic or becomes consequential depends on the grit and perseverance of the Citizens and the courage and political will of the Legislators whom they have elected. As we face the next step - nullification of unconstitutional mandates - do we have the courage? Do we have the will? Will we grow weary and discouraged, or will we persevere? Do we treasure the jewel and heritage of liberty enough to press on and strive to pass her on – polished and renewed – as the legacy we leave to the next generation? We have much to think about. We have much to do.

As I write these words, mask and vaccine mandates are hanging heavily over our heads. Our children are returning to school soon, and we are being told that the State will mandate masks. It doesn't matter that the risk to children from SARS-CoV-2 is statistically zero. It doesn't matter that negative consequences to children from being forced to wear masks has been documented. The State expects us to do what we are told... and expects the same of county and local governments. Health care workers have been mandated to receive the vaccine. It doesn't matter that some have natural immunity from previous infection. It doesn't matter that no evidence has been provided to demonstrate that health care workers have been transmitting COVID to patients. It doesn't matter that many of these health care workers will leave their jobs before submitting to this unreasonable mandate, and an exodus of health care workers will make what is already a shortage of health care professions even worse. **The State seems not to care about facts or consequences.**

The next step after passing such a resolution as the one passed on 8/25/21 in Cattaraugus County is nullification of specific mandates. But we must not be naïve. The resolution does not mean we are back to pre-oligarchy days in which freedom reigned. We are still in the oligarchy and clawing our way out of the quicksand of the soft tyranny that has been eroding our liberties for decades will take vision, effort, courage, and time. The next step is to stay in touch with the Legislators and ask them to consider nullifying mandates as we go. We the People need to do our diligence to make the case that nullification is reasonable and justified against specific mandates. We can't just stomp our feet and

wring our hands and post our memes... If we expect the Legislators to take a courageous stand, we need to back them with well crafted arguments and ideas that are cohesive and clearly communicated. We need to know our stuff and express it well.

Get informed. Stay informed. Pursue truth. Communicate with clarity. Identify mandates that are unreasonable, arbitrary and that lack justification. Then start a dialogue with the Legislators about nullifying (i.e. refusing to enforce) that mandate in your county.

And above all remember that national repentance is the true answer to national restoration and renewal. So pray to the Creator Redeemer God from whom our rights originate that He would have mercy on this land and turn our hearts and minds back to Him.