

State of the ImmUnion



By *Hank Campbell* — February 28, 2017



Credit: Every Child By Two [1]

Just in time for the President's Address To Congress (a State of the Union, but since he has only been in office a few weeks, a new president doesn't use that term) the Every Child By Two health advocacy group has released a new "[State of the ImmUnion](#)" [2] report, to remind people of the importance of immunization.

It's easy to take it for granted now, because a lot of communicable diseases are relatively rare, but among Baby Boomers almost everyone knows of someone with polio. And measles kills far fewer than ever, thanks to vaccines. But anti-vaccine beliefs, which were for most of this century just the domain of fringe kooks on one side and a lot of wealthy elites on the other, who relied on poor kids for herd immunity, believing their special snowflakes were at risk of getting autism with vaccines, have been a growing problem for since the late 1990s [in states most likely to believe the worst about food, medicine and every chemical](#) [3].

Some offhand comments by President Trump have renewed concern.

In 2008, Senator Obama expressed similar concern about vaccines and autism, but not on Twitter for millions, and so the media and political activists firmly against President Trump during the campaign of 2016 have not let his comments die. Yet there have been signs things will be better than critics have said. The President's science and health picks so far have been good **(1)**, and though anti-vaccine fanatic Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. insisted he was getting an important advisory position with President Trump, [after I wrote about why that was a bad idea in the *Wall Street Journal*](#) [4] his team immediately said no offer had been made to Kennedy. And that could be true, Kennedy also said President Obama was putting him in charge of EPA, though that was also only ever promoted by Kennedy. **(2)**

What everyone literate in science and health agree on is that immunization is important. In a civilized society, the greatest country in the world, no kids should have to go without a vaccine, including for financial reasons, and they sure should not go without one because of the beliefs of their wealthy, anti-science parents.

The [Every Child By Two](#) [1] report says that the Vaccines for Children program will prevent 22 million illnesses, 21 million hospitalizations, 732,000 deaths and nearly \$1.4 trillion in societal costs among children born during the first 20 years of the program. [I just got done making fun of pretend money claims about California regulations](#) [5], there is no way to really know how much we actually saved because something *didn't* happen, but we can map the past, and doing that we know that before vaccines, the lost productivity due to illness was high, not to mention hospitalizations and worse. It's entirely preventable and at a low cost. If it saves anywhere close to even \$276 billion, it's worth it.

[Dr. Alex Berezow wrote a wish list here for what he hopes President Trump will address](#) [6] but vaccines are something we can't afford not to have for kids. It's not just measles and mumps, there are 14 infectious diseases that are preventable - and a cancer. These are important medical breakthroughs that future generations will gape in wonder about being controversial for anyone, much less popular among coastal elites who claim to be better educated [than people in Alabama and Mississippi](#) [3]. It's not just a craze in California, Oregon and Washington now, though, Ohio and Minnesota have also had outbreaks.

In some states, it's not outright vaccine denial, they get some vaccines, but there is a financial reason they can't get them all.

It's a situation that a great society will fix. Here's hoping Congress and the White House listen.

Read the full State of the ImmUnion report [here](#) [2].

NOTE:

(1) There is always concern, but President Obama surrounded himself with UFO believers, a Doomsday prophet, an anti-vaccine zealot and a guy who claimed girls can't do math, and he ended up being no worse than other politicians when it came to evidence-based policies.

(2) Though with a little more credibility. Kennedy raised a lot of money for Obama, was an investor in a solar company, a pet cause of President Obama, [and the other member of Kennedy's firm got just the job that was discussed](#) [7]. I like to think that I torpedoed his chances of ruining Obama's credibility with the medical community just like I did for Trump.

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Source URL: <https://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/28/state-immunion-10925>

Links

[1] <http://vaccinateyourfamily.org>

[2] [http://vaccinateyourfamily.org/files/resources/State_of_the_ImmUnion_2017_ReportECBT_\(1\).pdf](http://vaccinateyourfamily.org/files/resources/State_of_the_ImmUnion_2017_ReportECBT_(1).pdf)

[3] http://www.science20.com/science_20/blog/washington_or_alabama_who_more_pro_science-79868

[4] <http://www.wsj.com/articles/ignore-anti-vaccine-hysteria-mr-trump-1484093196?source=acsh.org>

[5] <http://www.acsh.org/news/2017/02/24/if-we-could-spend-pretend-money-california-regulations-would-drive-us-budget-surplus>

[6] <http://acsh.org/news/2017/02/27/what-we-hope-hear-trumps-address-joint-session-congress-10918>

[7]

http://www.science20.com/science_20/blog/if_rfk_jr_wasnt_good_enough_for_pres_obama_he_shouldnt_be_good_enough_219967