

# Exhibit 395

Pfizer Quietly financed groups lobbying for  
COVID Vaccine Mandates

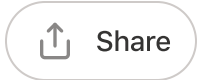
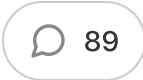
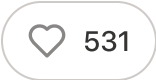
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# Pfizer Quietly Financed Groups Lobbying for COVID Vaccine Mandates

Many of the supposedly independent consumer, medical and civil rights groups that created the appearance of broad support for the mandate received funding from one of the vaccines' manufacturers.



LEE FANG  
APR 24, 2023



In the midst of a contentious debate about Chicago's plan to force employers to require their workers to take the COVID-19 vaccine, Karen Freeman-Wilson, president of the

Chicago Urban League, appeared on television to dismiss complaints that such rules would disproportionately harm the Black community.

“The health and safety factor here far outweighs the concern about shutting people out or creating a barrier,” Freeman-Wilson [said](#) on WTTW in August 2021.

Earlier that year, her group had received a \$100,000 grant from Pfizer, the manufacturer of one of the most commonly used COVID-19 vaccines in the United States, for a project to promote "vaccine safety and effectiveness." Although the Chicago Urban League is not normally shy about disclosing its corporate donors, the support from Pfizer is not listed in the [“partners”](#) section on its website. The drug industry funding likewise went unmentioned during the interview.

Pfizer’s grant to the Chicago Urban League was one of many that Pfizer made to nonprofits and trade organizations. Pfizer doled out special funding to groups across the country that lobbied in favor of government policies to mandate the COVID-19 vaccine.

The extensive [list](#) of those with funding from the pharmaceutical giant includes consumer, doctor, and medical groups, as well as public health organizations and civil rights nonprofits. Many of those groups did not disclose the funding they received from Pfizer while they were advocating for policies that would force workers to get the vaccine.

There were several different and sometimes overlapping vaccine mandates in the country. At the federal level, President Joe Biden issued an executive order, which was ultimately struck down in court, mandating vaccinations at all employers with 100 workers or more. A number of state and local governments forced public employees to get vaccinated and tried to force private-sector employers to follow suit. And many large employers required their employees to get vaccinated without any prodding from the government.

Critics of these employer mandates have noted that the majority of the proposed mandates, including Biden’s, made no exception for individuals with natural immunity through prior infection. Proponents of the mandates [claimed](#) that the vaccines would

prevent transmission of COVID-19, an argument that lacked sound scientific basis at the time and has further unraveled.

“You’re not going to get COVID if you have these vaccinations,” Biden falsely [claimed](#) in July 2021, as his administration and local governments were preparing mandate orders. Rochelle Walensky, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, similarly [stated](#) that vaccinated individuals "do not carry the virus."

But it wasn’t just these unsupported claims by leading government officials that shaped the groundwork for COVID-19 mandates. A coalition of highly visible groups backed by Pfizer and the pharmaceutical industry provided much of the lobbying support for coercive vaccine policies. Here are the most important examples:

- **The National Consumers League**, a century-old corporate watchdog group, announced [support](#) for “government and employer mandates requiring [COVID-19] vaccination" in August 2021, during roughly the same period in which it accepted \$75,000 from Pfizer earmarked for “vaccine policy efforts.” The organization is also led in part by Andrea LaRue, who serves as an NCL board member. LaRue’s work as a [highly paid contract lobbyist](#) to Pfizer, focused on vaccine policy, is not disclosed by NCL’s website.
- **The Immunization Partnership**, a Houston-based public health nonprofit, lobbied publicly against Texas legislation in 2021 designed to prevent vaccine passports and municipal vaccine mandates. The Immunization Partnership [claimed](#) that the bills “erode the vital role of our state’s public health and medical experts in combating this pandemic.” The partnership did not disclose that it received \$35,000 from Pfizer that year for “legislative advocacy.”
- **The American Pharmacists Association, American College of Preventive Medicine, Academy of Managed Care Pharmacy, American Society for Clinical Pathology and the American College of Emergency Physicians** signed a [letter](#) in support of the Biden administration mandate to require employers with 100 or more employees to require their employees to be fully vaccinated or tested at least weekly. The organizations all received individual grants from Pfizer.

- The **National Hispanic Medical Association** [worked](#) with public relations firm Culture One World to distribute "press release and media placements" that "called on employers of essential workers to mandate COVID-19 vaccines." The group also signed on to joint statements lobbying in favor of the Biden administration vaccine mandate. NHMA received \$30,000 from BIO, a vaccine industry lobby group that represents Pfizer and Moderna, IRS [filings](#) show.
- **The American Academy of Pediatrics** was one of the most visible organizations working to build public support for vaccine mandates. The organization received multiple, specialized grants from Pfizer in 2021. Pfizer also provided grants to individual state chapters of the AAP earmarked for lobbying on vaccine policy. The Ohio AAP chapter, for instance, [lobbied](#) the Ohio legislature against bills to curb coercive COVID-19 vaccine policies, while receiving an "immunization legislation" advocacy grant from Pfizer.

The pharmaceutical industry remained largely in the background on these controversial mandate policies, which faced opposition from a broad array of civil libertarians, labor unions, and community-based groups. Instead, the industry mobilized support for the mandates through third-party organizations to which it typically provided financial support.

Pfizer and most of the organizations funded by the pharmaceutical giant listed above did not respond to a request for comment.

The American College of Preventive Medicine noted in an email that the group endorsed the COVID-19 vaccine mandate after the policy was brought to the organization's board. "Regarding the specific question about the COVID-19 vaccines, supporting a vaccine mandate does not support one vaccine manufacturer over another," said Drew Wallace, a spokesperson for ACPM.

Critics note that drug industry money presents an inherent conflict of interest that shaped the discourse around COVID-19 mandates.

"If people or institutions advocated for or implemented mandates, while failing to disclose ties to the vaccine companies, that is a serious ethical violation, and potentially

even unlawful, and should be thoroughly investigated,” said Jenin Younes, an attorney formerly with the New Civil Liberties Alliance, who brought some of the first legal challenges to vaccine mandates.

Dr. Aaron Kheriaty, an expert in bioethics, noted that pharmaceutical firms routinely finance outside organizations to shape medical decisions and health care policy.

Pfizer, Kheriaty said, engaged in a “form of market manipulation by pushing mandates using organizations that present themselves as scientifically credible, or acting in the public interest, while creating by force a market for the company’s products.”

“Pharmaceutical companies spend very large portions of their budgets on marketing, including on various health care organizations and third parties, and they do that because they get a return on that investment. It makes business sense,” Kheriaty noted.

The pharmaceutical industry has long shaped health care policy through outside advocacy organizations.

The late Evan Morris, a former lobbyist for Genentech, famously once presided over a \$50 million lobbying budget, much of which went to third-party groups that amplified the pharmaceutical giant’s messages.

In one particularly lucrative coup, Morris used outside groups to stoke fears and plant news stories around avian-flu and the need for the government to stockpile Tamiflu. The public relations tactic [reportedly](#) helped generate hundreds of millions of dollars in revenue for Genentech parent company Roche, which manufactures Tamiflu.

On another occasion, Morris orchestrated a delay in the Food and Drug Administration's decision to ban the use of the cancer drug Avastin, then one of Genentech's most profitable products. The FDA had determined that Avastin was ineffective in treating breast cancer, but Smith mobilized outside advocacy groups to pressure the agency to reconsider its decision, [according](#) to the Wall Street Journal.

Efforts by other controversial drug makers to employ similar strategies have been well

documented. For example, Purdue Pharma [covertly funded](#) third-party advocacy groups to encourage looser criteria for prescribing OxyContin and other highly addictive opioid painkillers.

In the case of Pfizer, the company was able to mobilize widespread support among policymakers to make its COVID-19 vaccine one of the most profitable medical products in history. In 2021 alone, Pfizer generated over [\\$36.7 billion](#) in revenue from the vaccine.

"From a public health perspective, [the vaccine mandates] did not make any sense for a couple of reasons," said Dr. Martin Kulldorff, a professor of medicine on leave from Harvard University.

"One is that if you had COVID, then you have excellent immunity," Kulldorff said. "The second is that back in 2021, when there was a shortage of vaccines, the important thing was to vaccinate older, high risk Americans and also in other parts of the world like India and Brazil, but instead a lot of the vaccines went to younger people who are low risk and didn't need it."

The Biden administration later faced a string of rulings from federal courts declaring the mandate unconstitutional. The Supreme Court in January 2022 overturned the OSHA requirement that mandated workers at businesses with 100 or more employees receive COVID-19 vaccinations, but left in place mandates for workers in medical facilities.

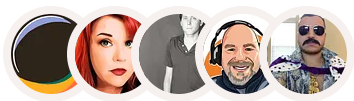
Workers affected by other COVID-19 vaccine mandates weren't so lucky. New York City terminated [more than 1,700 members](#) of its municipal workforce for their refusal to comply with a vaccine mandate that took effect in October 2021. This year, the city [ended](#) its vaccine mandate, but many of the fired workers are still fighting to get their jobs back in court.

Kheriaty, the bioethicist, was fired from the University of California-Irvine School of

Medicine for refusing to comply with the university's vaccine mandate, claiming natural immunity from prior infection. He is one of thousands of people fired because of similar policies.

“We tossed overboard the principle of informed consent and assumed – without evidence – that the COVID vaccine would help people beyond the specific recipient,” Kheriaty said.

*Image via CFOTO/Future Publishing via Getty Images*



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