A Special Interview with Barbara Loe Fisher
By Dr. Mercola

DM: Dr. Joseph Mercola
BF: Barbara Loe Fisher

Introduction:

DM: Hello. This is Dr. Mercola. Today, I am joined with Barbara Loe Fisher. You may know that she is one of the co-founders and the President of the National Vaccine Information Center who for the last 30 years had been the leading pioneer in vaccine safety and informed consent.

Today, we are here to discuss individual susceptibility to vaccines and how some people are being thrown under the bus for the intention of providing the broader public good at least from the government’s perspective of providing this immune protection – typically, they refer to it as herd immunity – and they are willing to sacrifice individuals.

We are here to examine the ethics of this approach. Thank you for joining us Barbara.

BF: Thank you Dr. Mercola. Yes, I mean, it really all began in 1905 here in America when the U.S. Supreme Court in a case Jacobson versus Massachusetts decided that states could compel citizens to be vaccinated or re-vaccinated for smallpox which was of course the first vaccine. Back then utilitarianism was very much in fashion in Europe and here in this country. Utilitarianism basically is that some can be sacrificed for the welfare of the rest.

It’s really interesting when read Jacobson versus Massachusetts that U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1905 because what the judges said was that doctors could predict ahead of time who would be injured and therefore it was okay basically to mandate vaccination even against a parent’s will or an individual’s will.

We know in the subsequent 100 plus years since that Supreme Court decision that doctors often cannot predict ahead of time.

DM: Even in 1905 they didn’t had the ability to predict adverse reactions to smallpox vaccine because that was the only vaccine at that time.

BF: No, and the lawyers for the doctors convinced the court that they could and they convinced them that it was okay to force some people against their will to engage in a medical procedure that do carry risks; they acknowledged there were risks for “the greater good.”

Now, what’s interesting about the case too is in 1923 there was another U.S. Supreme Court case Buck versus Bell. This involved a mentally retarded – what they said was a mentally retarded woman in Virginia – and it involved the forced sterilization of this mentally retarded woman Carrie Buck.
The U.S. Supreme Court justice at the time Oliver Wendell Holmes made an amazing statement. He used Jacobson versus Massachusetts to justify the sterilization of this young woman. He basically said that the principle that sustains compulsory immunization justifies cutting the fallopian tube. Really, this was a very sort of eugenics approach because he was arguing that society should be protected from children being born to mentally retarded individuals.

That’s 1923. That’s before what happened in Germany where basically when you look at the doctor’s trial Nuremberg that was held by the Nuremberg Tribunal after World War II. It was really utilitarianism that was also on trial there in addition to the doctors who were charged with crimes against humanity.

I think back to Buck versus Bell and that whole idea that society can force some people to undergo these kinds of violations of human rights really in the name of the greater good. I think that this brings us full circle to today and what we’re seeing today with this very militaristic approach to vaccination.

There is a case here recently in California where you had a public health official with a nurse with vaccines going door-to-door, knocking on people’s doors in California and saying, “We have a list here. We understand that your daughter hasn’t received a DTaP shot. Her booster shot.” The mother says on television, “Yes, that’s right.” “We’re here to give that shot to your daughter right now.” And she basically said a few things and slammed the door in his face because this is an invasion of privacy. This is harassment really.

DM: Because in California they have the right of philosophical exemption. Is that correct?

BF: That’s right. I think really what’s happening in California is a precursor to the pharma-medical lobby, public health lobby trying to take away the personal belief exemption in California. I think that’s what really a lot of this is about.

Because organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics and other medical organizations who do receive funding from the pharmaceutical industry have stated that their goal is to eliminate non-medical exemptions. And in this country, the only way that we have the right and the freedom to exercise informed consent to vaccination is the exemptions that exist legally in state vaccine laws. That means a medical exemption, a personal belief…

DM: Medical exemption is present in all states.

BF: It is but unfortunately it’s almost impossible to get a medical exemption in the United States anymore.

DM: Why is that?

BF: Doctors won’t write them because when they do and those exemptions don’t conform to very narrow guidelines of what constitutes a medical reason for not vaccinating somebody that’s promulgated by the AAP and the Centers for Disease Control then they are called by public
health officials in the state and they are harassed for giving a medical exemption. So what doctors do is they don’t want to bother with it. They won’t give medical exemptions.

**DM:** And for those that do who are aware of the issues that you’re discussing, are they threatened with removal of their license or reprimand of their license?

**BF:** They are leaned on to withdraw their exemption. They are leaned on to conform strictly to the very narrow guidelines of medical contraindication. So if a physician, in their personal professional opinion, believe that a child or an adult is at risk for having a vaccine reaction even if they believe that, they are afraid to give a medical exemption if it’s not a CDC or AAP guideline.

And frankly ever since the 1986 National Childhood Vaccine Injury Act was passed those contraindications to vaccination have narrowed so that almost nothing is a contraindication medically to not give a vaccine to someone.

So here you have very few medical exemptions being given. Parent’s whose children have suffered vaccine reactions who had been hurt, permanently injured by vaccination.

**DM:** Damaged.

**BF:** Can’t get a medical exemption for their children or the siblings of their children. This kind of oppression leaves people with only the non-medical exemption to take that is the personal belief or conscientious belief exemption that exists in 18 states or the religious belief exemption to vaccination.

**DM:** And that’s in 48 states?

**BF:** It’s in 48 states. But again, those exemptions are under attack by the medical-pharma lobby that don’t want to have any exemptions except the ones that they give medically which I already said they don’t give anymore.

**DM:** Because it limits their potential market.

**BF:** Right.

**DM:** Under the guise of protecting the public health.

**BF:** Right. What it is is it is penalizing. It is threatening the lives of people who have individual susceptibility; biologically, genetically, environmentally to vaccine reactions. People who come from families with autoimmune diseases, reactions to vaccines, reactions to prescription drugs, people who already have issues with their immune function, they are being thrown under the bus.

It’s unethical and it’s a violation of human rights to not be able to protect yourself or your child if you know that you are biologically vulnerable to vaccination. So it’s becoming I think really
one of the biggest topics of discussion in families who know that they are susceptible and who have no recourse except to fight to try to protect vaccine exemptions in this country.

I actually think there should be laws passed to allow a physician if he or she believes professionally that a person is at risk for having a vaccine reaction, there should be nothing that forces that physician to adhere to very narrow contraindications by a government agency or by frankly a professional organization, the American Academy of Pediatrics which is simply a trade organization.

They then can in their professional opinion give that medical exemption. They should not be harassed by anybody for exercising what they believe is their professional opinion about whether a person is at risk for having a vaccine reaction.

So what do we have here? We basically have a one size fits all vaccination policy that is increasingly becoming militantly enforced. It is a de facto selection of the biologically and genetically vulnerable for sacrifice in the name of the greater good. This is unethical. It’s a human rights violation. I believe it should be illegal.

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We have a lot of work to do in terms of trying to find ways to protect the human rights and the parental rights and the legal rights of Americans when it comes to vaccination.

**DM:** It’s this matter of preserving out health freedom, our current health freedoms. Our intention of course is to increase those freedoms because there is only 18 states that really have an idealized situation. Ideally, it will be all 50 but that’s something you’re working too. But your concern is that it’s actually going to the opposite direction. They are actually restricting it.

We certainly like to inform and educate but on the other hand, we like to get people practical resources and recommendations in what they can do. NVIC is all about informed consent. Certainly, you can go to our site, to your site and others out there to learn more about these issues. You can go to the government database, the VAERS database and there is a tool to easily search that on your website to independently make your determination and make your informed consent, informed choice about whether this is something for you or your family.

Once you have done that due diligence and that process and you have reached the conclusion that for this specific vaccine whatever it is that you don’t want to administer that to yourself or to your child, can you provide some general recommendations that a parent or an adult might follow to exercise their freedom of choice.

**BF:** I think the most important thing that anyone can do is to have a good relationship with a doctor, the healthcare professional that is helping them make these healthcare decisions including vaccine decisions. If your doctor doesn’t treat you with respect, doesn’t listen to you and your concerns and work as a partner with you, I think you need to find another doctor, another healthcare professional who will help you and work as a partner with you.
We’re seeing this sort of militant, either do it my way or it’s the highway. You either vaccinate exactly as I say or I’m sorry I’m not going to provide medical care for your children and your family. This is causing a lot of fear and anxiety among the people and I think it’s actually going to do the opposite of what doctors think it’s going to do. You can’t take a hammer and force people.

So having that really good relationship with a healthcare provider is the number one thing that you need to do.

**DM:** Do you have any recommendations how to find that healthcare provider? Admittedly, to your experience and certainly my experience is that the vast majority of physicians are not going to fall into this category with respect to vaccines, certainly for other areas they would. Most physicians are well intentioned but it’s just – this is the last area that any physician who is interested in natural healing lets go. It certainly was true for me and for most of the physicians I know who really made this transition. That is a very difficult area to give up.

**BF:** I know. I think it’s trial and error. It’s like when you look for a new car, you go to a lot of dealers and you check out the car. You have to become an educated healthcare consumer and you cannot expect that your doctor is going to have a good attitude about being a partner with you.

**DM:** I agree. One of the recommendations that I have – not necessarily for vaccines but certainly it would apply here – is to go to areas where people are health conscious and that tends to be like health food stores and most every community has a health food store. Of course the definition of that varies but a truly authentic store that is interested in many of the principles that we’re discussing so there is a community of people who are knowledgeable about the local resources within that community.

So that you can ask the people who work there maybe even the customers these questions. If you were to spend time and do due diligence, you should be able to locate the individuals near especially if you’re new to the area. If you have been there for awhile you may know already or maybe you’re the one advising other people but that’s certainly a start.

**BF:** That’s a great idea. I agree with you that people who are like-minded tend to group together.

**DM:** And network. I guess you could also use social networking too in Facebook and such to identify that although I don’t know of any specific resources. Maybe if someone is aware of it they can add it to the comment on this (indiscernible 14:28).

**BF:** I mean our Facebook page, NVIC’s Facebook page is really a community of people who are very much looking at health in the way that you are. We have a lot of followers who follow you who also follow NVIC because we specialize in vaccination. So that’s a place that you can go and find like-minded people.
I think what’s happening too is a lot of like women who become pregnant and then they have their babies, they are also mothers’ groups who are talking about this. Certainly anyone who is into prepared childbirth classes, breastfeeding classes often they are looking at making independent decisions about healthcare for their children. It’s another way to network with young mothers who are into the more alternative (indiscernible 15:21)

**DM:** (indiscernible 15:21) for breastfeeding.

**BF:** That’s exactly right.

**DM:** So that’s a step. That’s a good start to identify these resources because you have to have a practical alternative but are there any recommendations you have for obtaining some of these other non-medical exemptions?

**BF:** The National Vaccine Information Center, our biggest project right now is trying to defend and protect vaccine exemptions in the states. We have an online resource called the Vaccine Advocacy Portal, NVIC’s Advocacy Portal. It’s real easy. It’s free. You go in and you register. What you can do is with one click of the mouse on the computer you can be put in touch with your state legislature.

We put out action alerts about legislation that’s cropping up in the states where the pharma-medical lobby is trying to take away exemptions in your state. We actually educate you on how to fight to protect vaccine exemptions. That’s something that you can do as well to take personal action to protect vaccine exemptions.

I also think that we’ve got to take a look at the legal system to the extent that we can. When doctors don’t do what they are supposed to do, you view information ahead of time about benefits and risks of vaccination, report and record reactions etc. We need to take a look at talking to some of the professional, the licensing boards and in the state and the professional organizations that are looking at doctors who need to behave ethically.

I don’t know exactly what that looks like but I think that increasingly we need to look at the legal arena because it’s really not right for doctors to be giving and vaccine providers to be giving vaccines that carry risks and not be doing everything that they can to minimize those risks for people.

**DM:** I thoroughly agree. The unfortunate reality at least in my experience is that there is a relatively small percentage of the community who will take an activist role, who have the time, effort and energy to undergo those processes and commit to those projects.

So for those who are not activist minded and I definitely would encourage people to participate but of course not many people will. Are there any specific recommendations you have for the religious exemptions since that is present in 48 of the 50 states? And for many if not most because that’s 30 more states where the conscientious objection is available. Their only practical alternative to opting out of the vaccine system. Is there any templates or processes or strategies that you found to be useful in your 30 years of working with this?
BF: I’m glad you asked me that question because I feel very strongly about the religious exemption to vaccination in this country. The Constitution protects our right to worship freely. It protects our right to hold religious or spiritual beliefs, our own religious or spiritual beliefs. You do not have to belong to a church or an organized religion that officially opposes vaccination to take a religious exemption to vaccination. States that have legal language that restrict your ability to take a religious exemption to vaccination based on the fact that for example, you don’t belong to a church whenever that has been challenged at the state court level, its’ always been found to be unconstitutional.

You have the right to have personal, spiritual beliefs. They have to be sincerely held. They have to be truly held. But you have the right to defend your religious or spiritual belief about vaccination. That doesn’t mean that you don’t talk about science, you talk about your spiritual belief.

To me this is one of the most important freedoms that we have in America and that is to be able to hold personal, spiritual beliefs or conscientious beliefs. Obey our conscience. It helps keep the practice of medicine with regard to vaccination honest and ethical.

We must defend the religious exemption to vaccination at all costs. It’s all that stands between us and a militant oppressive forcing of vaccination

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by those who have literally at this point in time no accountability or liability for what happens after those vaccines are given.

DM: Thank you for sharing your views on that. I thoroughly agree with that. If someone listens to this and sort of rewind this section of the video and listen to it a few times they would have all the basic details on how to construct that request for religious exemption. I think the key is as you mentioned it needs to be sincere and personal and not some type of formula that sign up.

But be that as it may many people aren’t gifted in writing skills. That’s just the fact of the matter. Are there any examples that others have used to successfully obtain this or are you reluctant to share that because it takes away from the personal aspect of it?

BF: I think truly to protect their religious exemption, a person does have to have a sincere religious or spiritual belief and they need to know how to articulate it themselves and defend it in a court of law because what’s happening is those who file religious exemptions to vaccination in some states like New York are being hauled into rooms by state government officials and school officials, lawyers for the state and being grilled about the sincerity of their religious beliefs with regard to vaccination.

If they haven’t dug down deep and examined why they believe this on spiritual or religious beliefs they can’t defend it. I advice people to look inside of themselves and if they have that
sincere belief then they need to write it down, they need to talk about it and they need to know that at some point, they may have to standup in a court of law and defend it.

I don’t agree with state officials grilling people in America about their religious beliefs. I think it’s wrong to do that. We should have laws on the books where people sign an affidavit, this is my sincere religious belief and that should be the end of it. It’s not the place of a government official to grill people in America about the sincerity of their religious beliefs. Nevertheless that’s the situation right now so you better be prepared to defend it.

**DM:** Bringing the parent into a court or a legal scenario is certainly one option. It’s done not that frequently but what is done more frequently and very common and this should be anticipated is that usually a lower level health official representative like the local school nurse most typically or even the principal or some type of administrator within the school, the grade school typically will have the parent come in to defend that. And that could be anticipated.

So undergoing this exercise is I think a useful strategy to developing that knowing that it could elevate to legal issues. It typically doesn’t. Because if you are able to convincingly demonstrate to that person who is authentically and sincerely seeking to provide benefit to their entire domain of individuals that they are responsible for in their school, the last thing they want is an epidemic of disease. They truly believe, sincerely believe, I mean, they would bet their life on it that their intention of administering these vaccines is going to help them. It’s an admiral goal unfortunately it’s shortsighted and ill informed. At least from my perspective and I believe yours.

So doing that necessary evaluation and taking the time, investing hours maybe days, weeks to come up with a strategy that you can successfully defend to others could certainly be worth the investment. Because you know it’s about risk and balances, and we all have limited time so where do you put your time. Hopefully you get the best benefit, the best value of the investment of that time. If it’s done properly could literally be a difference between a massive difference in the health of your child or not having helping the child.

**BF:** The other thing that some parents do is they actually sit down with a spiritual advisor, a minister, a priest, somebody who they can have a dialog with and explain their sincere religious and spiritual beliefs of the matter. Sometimes what they do is they get letters from that spiritual advisor that attests to the sincerity of their spiritual religious belief.

I think this is something that is a useful exercise because I do think that men and women of different churches whether you’re talking Protestant or Catholic or synagogues, whatever you are talking about in terms of organized religions need to be educated about how the spiritual and religious beliefs of people are being violated and how they are being forced to violate their conscience.

Conscience is something that is inside all of us or should be inside all of us and if we can’t exercise our sincerely held conscientious or spiritual beliefs in America, we’re certainly not free. So I think that the more dialog we can have with people in our communities about the ethics of this is very important because it’s an education process.
So the people who can get that letter attesting to their sincere beliefs on it are also in a better position when they face state health officials.

**DM:** That is an incredible strategy and I would strongly endorse it because it’s useful for two perspectives. First, to educate the broader community and then secondarily, to have that letter testifying to the sincerity of the belief not necessarily endorsing the church’s position but sincerity of their spiritual conviction on this issue is going to go a lot further along the first level of resistance which is usually the local school authority.

And with that letter, and maybe even from someone in their community that they know and believe that would probably more than enough in the vast majority of cases to end the issue right there and not progress further or escalate further.

**BF:** One would hope. I think this is a very serious issue.

**DM:** Well it is. Our long term goal is to solve this at a foundational level and the religious exemption is certainly band-aid but it’s a useful band-aid. I always like to have strategies that people can use now without a lot of extra effort. There is some certainly there but it’s a useful one and actually maybe one of the best results of this conversation.

It’s actually the best recommendation I have ever encountered on how to go about this process. So I would encourage anyone who is seeking to exercise a religious exemption to replay this video and listen to it several times.

**BF:** I will give you my own example. I have two children who have had reactions to vaccines. One child who is vaccine injured. You know when I have to face doctors or officials about vaccinating other children in my family, I have a very deeply held spiritual and conscientious belief about this because I know that if I would allow my children to get more vaccines that they could die or be further injured.

This is a violation. This is a human rights violation for me and for anyone else who is in my position especially when we know there is individual susceptibility to vaccine reactions. So when you talk about religious or spiritual beliefs or conscientious beliefs in this context, it’s literally a life and death matter for some families. And in America, we should not be throwing people under the bus because they have individual biological or genetic or other reasons for being highly susceptible to vaccine reactions. This is immoral. It’s an immoral policy.

**DM:** And it’s relatively easy for you to have this deep conviction because of your personal experience with your son. Others are going more from an intellectual and academic perspective and it’s going to be a little more challenging to be as deeply convicted.

But I would recommend, thank God for the internet that whatever vaccine you are considering you can easily go to YouTube and type in the vaccine and type adverse reactions or side effects and you’ll probably have dozen, hundreds, thousands of videos of personal testimonies from
parents or patients themselves who has undergone an adverse reaction so that you can sort of play forward and substitute that individual with your own child.

It’s certainly not the same experience that you went through but it’s a substitute. They can have a little more incentive and motivation to achieve this level of conviction.

**BF:** I think most of us don’t think it’s going to happen to us. We always think it’s going to happen maybe to somebody else. Until it happens to you, until the risks are a hundred percent for you or your child, it’s hard to imagine. That’s why I think it is right to have people come forward who have suffered vaccine reactions. I call it witnessing. They are basically witnessing their own experience.

This is useful information so that people can start to put themselves in the place of those who have suffered. And then maybe we won’t such demonization and persecution of families with vaccine injured children because people will put themselves in their place.

What a great conversation.

**DM:** Yes indeed. They always are it seems.

**BF:** I know.

**DM:** I thank you for sharing that and really providing a really incredible and valuable resource that people can use immediately to apply their efforts and decisions with respect to implementing their own personal freedom of choice in this area. Thank you for helping articulate that and providing this as a resource and all that you.

**BF:** Thank you Dr. Mercola.