



Written by [C. Mitchell Shaw](#) on January 13, 2023

## Mickey Mouse and Uncle Sam: Lawsuit Claims Disney Was a “State Actor” With Covid Vaccine Mandate

In issuing employees an ultimatum to either receive the Covid jab or be fired, Disney acted as an arm of the Biden administration and violated employees’ privacy and religious rights, according to lawsuits filed by former Disney employees.

As of this writing, at least seven former employees have filed lawsuits against Disney over being terminated for not complying with mandatory Covid vaccines. Two of those employees — Beth Faber and Allison Williams — were fired from ESPN (which is owned by Disney and enforced Disney’s vaccine policy). In their lawsuit, Faber and Williams claim that Disney played the role of a “state actor,” and as such is subject to the Constitution’s “equal protection clause.”



CrispyCream27/Wikimedia Commons

The [lawsuit](#) claims that the “September 9, 2021 termination of Beth Faber, exactly on, and of Allison Williams shortly after, the date of President Biden’s announcement of a business mandate, are more than just symbolic, they are part of a very orchestrated and choreographed partnership.” In filings in connection with the lawsuit, lawyers for Faber and Williams wrote, “The Constitution provides that the government, and state actors cannot take life, liberty or property without due process and equal protection of the law,” adding:

There is no dispute that the Defense Department was looking to partner with private business in its effort to vaccinate. At what point does partnership go beyond independent entities working voluntarily toward a shared mission to entwinement, such that they can be considered a state actor[?]

To illustrate the argument that Disney was acting as an arm of the government, the lawsuit says:

Had the government instituted a requirement that all professional athletes and personnel of leading media outlet[s] are required to receive a vaccination, without rights to exemption, such an action would be subject to an equal protection challenge for its treatment of professional athletes and leading media differently than other similarly situated persons. A state actor performing such a function is subject to an equal protection challenge on the same basis.

The lawsuit also points to [a White House meeting attended by then-Disney CEO Bob Chapek](#) less than a week after Biden announced his vaccine mandate for all businesses with more than 100 employees.



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That meeting — with government and business leaders discussing ways to implement vaccine mandates even if Biden’s mandate did not stand in the courts — “reflect[ed] the active involvement of the highest level of management,” according to the lawsuit. Further, Chapek’s Disney vaccine mandate is a clear and obvious response to Biden’s demand for business leaders to act to “require” Covid vaccines, according to the lawsuit. The lawsuit quotes Biden as issuing the call to action when he stated, “If you’re a business leader, a nonprofit leader, a state or local leader, who has been waiting for full FDA approval to require vaccinations, I call on you now to do that. Require it.”

In support of its claim that Disney essentially acted as a “state actor,” the lawsuit shows that the blurry lines between Mickey Mouse and Uncle Sam are neither accidental nor new. The lawsuit mentions “Kristina Schake, who headed the Covid-19 vaccine education campaign of the Biden Administration,” and points out that she “was selected by Disney as its new executive vice president of global communications.” The lawsuit goes on to state that “Disney’s own website refers to her as ‘working at the nexus of government, media, business, entertainment, and technology,’” adding, “The close nexus continues, of course, when she works on the private side of the house.”

Further:

The close nexus also includes Disney’s naming of former Pentagon Press Secretary Geoff Morrell, “to the newly created position of chief corporate affairs officer, overseeing corporate communications, government relations and global public policy.”

These fairly recent incestuous connections between the House of Mouse and the State are part of a long, historical pattern, according to the lawsuit. As Daily Wire [reports](#):

The suit also alleged that Disney has decades-long ties to the Defense Department, which, alongside the Department of Health and Human Services, ran Operation Warp Speed, the government vaccine effort.

It said the Defense Department owns land at Disney World, and in April 2022, the Department said it would hold its Warrior Games at the Florida resort. The suit said the Department provided key support to the Marvel franchise such as “Iron Man,” now one of Disney’s most lucrative.

The company’s ties to the security state go back to its founding, the suit says, noting that founder Walt Disney himself was an FBI informant who let notorious Bureau Director J. Edgar Hoover have access to Disney scripts, and that the company generated wartime marketing materials during World War II.

And while acting as an agent of the government, Disney also ran roughshod over employees’ religious rights. The lawsuit claims that ESPN denied Faber’s and Williams’ requests for religious exemptions. They were not the only employees to receive such treatment. Orlando’s WESH Channel 2 News [reports](#) that former Disney employees Cheron Hayes and Seth Schmidt are part of a group of seven former Disney employees who are suing the company for “discrimination” under the Florida Civil Rights Act. Like Faber and Williams, Hayes and Schmidt claim they were terminated for refusing the job despite their claims of religious exemptions.

Hayes was fired on November 8, 2021, after serving the House of Mouse for nearly 15 years as a senior



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financial analyst. She told WESH, “I thought I’d found the company I would retire from, and, so for them to hit me with this, just for a shot, and for them to literally say, ‘No shot, no job,’ was, you know, it was very humiliating.” Schmidt was also a longtime employee of the company. After 11 years as a Disney Hollywood Studios employee, he was fired after his religious exemption was denied. He told WESH, “My manager said it’s not because of the job. ‘You do a great job. But because of all our policies, we have to let you go.’ It just felt disheartening.”

Rachel Rodriguez, who represents Hayes, Schmidt, and several other former Disney employees, told WESH that the law is clearly on her clients’ side, stating, “It can’t be overstated that the problems here have to do with discrimination under long-standing law,” and adding that Disney also “violated the privacy rights of” employees by requiring them to get the shot or get out.





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