German Lawmakers Reject Mandatory Vaccination Bill In Latest Blow To Chancellor Scholz

Description

GERMANY: Update (0900ET): In a major blow for German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, the Bundestag has rejected a bill that would have made COVID vaccination mandatory for all Germans over the age of 60.

Scholz had managed to build broad support for the bill among members of his 'stop sign' coalition, but when it came time to vote, 378 out of 683 parliamentarians voted against the bill, while only 296 voted in favor. The failure of the vote elicited cheers from AfD lawmakers, Reuters reported. It was a free vote, with lawmakers instructed not to follow party lines.

The Chancellor pulled out all the stops for the vote, even summoning his foreign minister, Annalena Baerbock, to leave a NATO meeting in Brussels to return for the vote.

Should the bill have passed, it's pretty clear what Scholz next step would have been. The Chancellor has been pushing for mandatory vaccination for all adults.

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The COVID pandemic has largely subsided in Europe (although health authorities have warned about an uptick in cases caused by subvariants and hybrid variants of the omicron strain). But this hasn't stopped German lawmakers from pushing for a new law that would legally require people age 60 and older to be vaccinated.

But that's not all. The deal struck by members of Germany's ruling "stop sign" coalition, which includes Chancellor Olaf Scholz's Social Democratic Party, the Greens and the 'classical liberal' Free Democrats, also includes an option for making COVID shots mandatory for everybody age 18 and older.

That second provision will depend on how the next wave of the pandemic develops during the fall, according to [Bloomberg](), which cited a local report.

According to other provisions in the proposed law, the government would initially try to "encourage" the unvaccinated to voluntary submit to inoculation (Germany still has millions of unvaccinated citizens, not unlike the US). Fortunately, even if the proposal becomes a law (it's due for a vote on Thursday), it will also include provisions that would reverse the situation if enough people receive their COVID shots voluntarily before the summer.

Lawmakers told Bloomberg that the goal of the proposal is "effective prevention."

> "We are united by the goal of effective prevention through the highest possible level of basic immunity for all adults for the fall, because in this way we can prevent the health system from being overwhelmed," they added.

Germany is still recording more than 200,000 cases and more than 300 deaths from the virus on most days. But with more than 75% of its population vaccinated, the pressure on the country's health-care system has significantly lessened since the depths of the pandemic.

Most western countries have strongly opposed mandatory vaccination requirements (although the Biden Administration in the US has attempted to force millions of workers to either get vaccinated or risk losing their jobs before the Supreme Court to declare Biden's executive orders unconstitutional). But Chancellor Scholz has decided that mandatory vaccination is permissible, so long as the Bundestag grants its blessing.

Another lawmaker said compulsory vaccination for all Germans over 60 will help the German economy remain "free" during the fall wave. Whether that's true or not remains to be seen.

by Tyler Durden

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Date Created

04/08/2022