Logical Fallacy Survival Guide for the COVID-19 Outbreak

During the COVID-19 outbreak, it's essential that you are able to distinguish the difference between reliable, factual information and information that is inaccurate or that is meant to mislead or confuse you. Your health and the health of your friends and family could depend on your ability to detect logical fallacies. This guide will help you determine whether the information you are receiving is reliable. Get the latest information about the pandemic on the [Johns Hopkins University COVID information page](#). The [CDC](#) is also a good source.

Radio or TV talk show host: "The COVID-19 situation is a hoax! The radical left is using an illness that is basically the flu to scare the country into shutting down the economy."
Fallacy: False authority
Fact: COVID-19 is a very contagious flu-like illness that can cause mild symptoms in some people but can be deadly for others, regardless of age, race, gender, education, politics, or socio-economic situation.

Politician: "If we keep wearing masks indoors, where will it end? It's government overreach! Next the government will be coming for our guns! And then they'll be coming for us!"
Fallacy: Slippery slope
Fact: People need to follow the advice of medical and public health experts to keep themselves and everyone else safe and healthy. Wearing masks indoors keeps you and others safer than not wearing masks. Government policies regarding public health will not lead to gun rights being restricted, and they will not lead to the FBI abducting you in the middle of the night.

A guy that lives down the street from you: "We have two choices: either we resist vaccine mandates or we're going to end up like Communist China!"
Fallacy: False dilemma (either/or)
Fact: Vaccine mandates help save lives, which is why children must have certain vaccines before attending school.

Politician and/or radio or TV talk show host: "The COVID-19 outbreak is Obama's fault! He was an idiot, and his Obamacare is making this situation worse!"
Fallacy: Straw man and *ad hominem*
Fact: President Obama didn't cause the COVID-19 outbreak, and the Affordable Care Act helped an additional 20 million Americans obtain health insurance, which will help them during this health crisis.

Religious leader: "All good Americans and all true believers will fight vaccine mandates and will keep meeting in person to pray! The faithful are doing this, so we should do it, too!"
Fallacy: *Ad populum* and bandwagon
Fact: Medical and public health experts recommend that everyone receive a COVID-19 vaccine unless there are medical reasons to not receive one. People who cannot get vaccinated for medical reasons rely on everyone else to receive vaccines to keep them safe.

Politician: "Vaccine and mask mandates are just like wearing the star of David in Nazi Germany! If we give in to this government overreach, we'll be thrown into concentration camps and eventually exterminated."
Fallacy: False analogy and *non-sequitur*
Fact: Comparing vaccine and mask mandates – policies established to save lives – to the anti-Semitic policies and death camps of the Nazi regime is abhorrent. Requiring vaccines and masks is very, very different than forcing people to wear a religious symbol that marks them as less than human and then torturing them to death.