

Squelched in Quebec

July 13, 2022

It's a Université Laval thing; a Quebec thing; a Canada thing.

These are no places to be if you want to debate questions about pandemics and vaccines now “settled” by government-mandated consensus. Professors Patrick Provost and Nicolas Derome, who both teach at Laval, recently got the message in spades.

Provost, professor of microbiology and immunology, has been suspended for two months without pay for doubting the wisdom of giving COVID-19 vaccines

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to children. Kids face only a very low risk of serious consequences from the disease and a nonzero risk of being hurt by vaccination.

A newspaper that quoted his thoughts on the data and on free speech has cravenly deleted the offending article, stressing that “we can't subscribe to” Provost's views.

Laval also suspended Derome, professor of



molecular biology, for expressing doubts about the value of vaccinating kids.

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The hazards of squelching discourse about life-and-death matters should be obvious. It's in our interest that scientists and everybody be able to freely investigate and discuss facts and interpretations without worrying whether an unauthorized assertion will cost the speaker two months of salary.

Or worse.

But some care nothing about logic and evidence — or, apparently, how useful these are to both individuals and to society at large.

It's not an attitude consistent with . . . Common Sense.

I'm Paul Jacob.