

Why restaurant workers left their jobs for good

The industry is struggling to hire as many of their employees refuse to return. **In Money**

'Impeachment': Edie Falco on playing Hillary Clinton

The FX miniseries chronicles the explosive sex scandal involving Monica Lewinsky. **In Life**



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USA TODAY NETWORK

Derrick Henry is fast becoming a legend

The Tennessee Titans running back is so big and so fast on the field that he defies logic, writes Gentry Estes. **In Sports**

USA TODAY

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Texas ban on abortion faces slew of lawsuits

Any of the challenges could decide law's fate

John Fritze
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON – The Biden administration's effort to get the Supreme Court to block a Texas ban on abortions after six weeks of pregnancy may be the best shot reproductive rights advocates now have to halt enforcement of the controversial law.

But the high-profile case is just one row in a Rubik's Cube of lawsuits that may signal where the Supreme Court is heading on the thorny question of abortion and whether it will continue to uphold the landmark Roe v. Wade decision that established the right to the procedure nationwide.

Texas' ban has prompted a flurry of overlapping and difficult-to-follow lawsuits in different courts, any one of which could decide its fate. The justices, meanwhile, also are considering challenges to other state abortion laws that might affect the Texas case.

Signed by Republican Gov. Greg Abbott in May, Texas' law bans abortions when cardiac activity is detected, which can occur at six weeks. The law includes no exception for rape or incest. It is the ban's unusual enforcement mechanism that has so far confounded courts: Rather than criminalizing the procedure, the law gives private citizens a right to sue abortion providers – and collect damages starting at \$10,000.

The Justice Department on Monday appealed a ruling from the New Orleans-based U.S. Court of Appeals for

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Texas' restrictive new abortion law has thrust the question back to the cultural, political and legal spotlight. KEVIN DIETSCH/GETTY IMAGES



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USA TODAY Snapshots Trust issues

The share of U.S. adults saying they have a great deal or fair amount of trust in the American people has hit a low.



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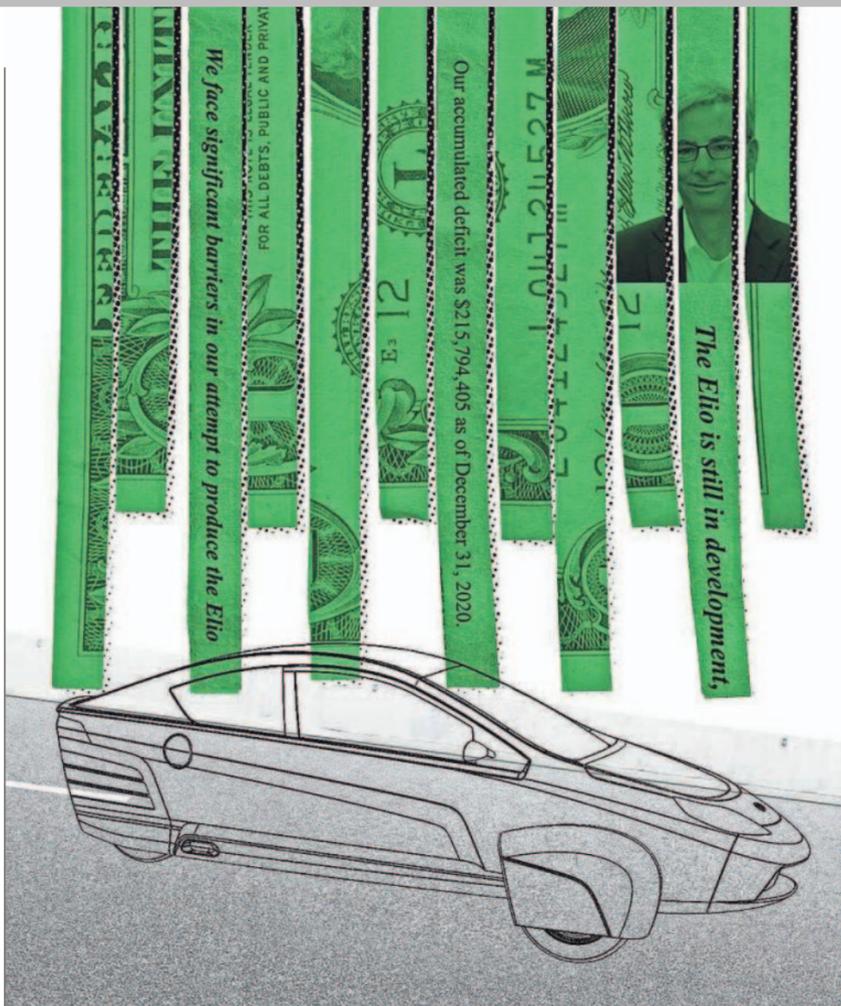


ILLUSTRATION: ANDREA BRUNTY/USA TODAY NETWORK; PHOTOS: ELIO MOTORS, GETTY IMAGES, AP

INVESTIGATION

Still waiting for the Elio

Startup took \$28M in deposits for futuristic car that never came

Nathan Bomey and Craig Harris
USA TODAY

PHOENIX – He promised to revolutionize transportation, drawing comparisons to Henry Ford and persuading roughly 65,000 people and an eccentric millionaire to invest in his vision of a futuristic, ultra-cheap, gas-powered car that would generate thousands of jobs.

After his pledge in 2013 to build an 84 mpg, three-wheeled vehicle with two tandem seats priced at less than \$7,000, Phoenix engineer-entrepreneur Paul Elio enjoyed a whirlwind of publicity. He secured about \$28 million in deposits from potential customers and landed investments throughout the country from believers in his vision.

Elio appeared on CNN, scored stories in The New York Times, USA TODAY and The Wall Street Journal, and won praise for rising Republican star Gov. Bobby Jindal for his promised investments at a former General Motors plant in Louisiana.

But nearly a decade after his company, Elio Motors, unveiled a prototype vehicle, not a single car has been produced, leaving tens of thousands of depositors alternately wondering, waiting or fuming.

The company – now based in a Spartan office leased month-to-month and next to a pawnshop in central Phoenix – had only three employees at the end of 2020, according to a public filing.

"If this doesn't work, I'll lose more than anybody. This is not some pyramid scheme. This is not a Bernie Madoff."

Elio Motors founder and CEO Paul Elio

WAITING FOR ELIO

Read more of our series on the perplexing tale of the three-wheeled Elio car that, despite millions of dollars in capital and years of promises, has yet to be built. Coming Thursday and Friday in USA TODAY's Money section and at usatoday.com/money.

And despite Elio Motors never hiring more than a handful of workers, Securities and Exchange Commission records show the company had lost nearly \$216 million as of Dec. 31, 2020, about eight years after it began accepting reservations.

The company has little to show for all that money spent, save for 65,453 car reservations – most of them non-refundable – as well as an aging prototype and an empty factory.

Press releases and SEC records show that while Elio the company was taking in money, Paul Elio the man managed on multiple occasions to clear up personal debts, including credit card liabilities and taxes he owed the IRS, according to records USA TODAY obtained from Maricopa County Superior Court in Phoenix.

When USA TODAY this summer began investigating how he pursued and spent money, all the while making repeated promises that the car was right around the corner, it appeared that the company had gone silent.

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

Infection can lead to better immunity with shot

Research into 'hybrid immunity' still unclear

Karen Weintraub
USA TODAY

Many people have contracted COVID-19 over the past 20 months, despite their best efforts, or because they didn't take enough precautions against the coronavirus.

Data is just starting to emerge about how protected they may be against another infection.

As with most illnesses, contracting COVID-19 provides immune "memory" that helps protect against a future infection. But it's still unclear how sick a person has to get with COVID-19 to develop enough immune memory to be protective and for how long. That's why the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends even people who have had the disease get vaccinated against it.

A growing body of research suggests infection plus vaccination provides the strongest protection against a wide range of variants, possibly for a long time.

People who were infected and then vaccinated some months later have "what's called 'hybrid immunity,' which is like super-immunity," said Warner Greene, a virologist at the Gladstone Institute in San Francisco.

This combined protection seems to last a long time, according to a new study in the journal Science. It may

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After a deadly year, Catholic Latinos flock to vaccines

Rate is among highest for US religious groups

Rick Jervis
USA TODAY

SAN ANTONIO – There were many dark days over the past year at Divine Providence Catholic Church, when the coronavirus ravaged families, and funerals outnumbered Bible studies. Parish leaders counted 54 COVID-19-related deaths among its predominately Latino congregants. The church stood nearly empty for more than a year, as the pandemic kept many parishioners at home.

Last Sunday, however, more than 200 parishioners filled the pews, most of them masked and a majority vaccinated against the deadly virus. They swayed to Spanish-sung hymns and lined up for communion.

The Rev. Ryan Carnecer, the parish pastor, said the church's strong embrace of COVID-19 vaccines has been a major reason for its rapid return to normalcy.

"COVID was so real for us. There were deaths," said Carnecer, who is Filipino and gives mass in fluent Spanish. "I told them, 'Please vaccinate.' I'm so grateful they followed."

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CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC

CORONAVIRUS NEWS BRIEFING

CDC: Pfizer 93% effective in ages 12-18

Even in the throes of the summer spike in coronavirus cases across the U.S., the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine proved 93% effective at keeping adolescents 12 to 18 out of the hospital, according to an analysis by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention published Tuesday.

The report may help boost uptake of the vaccine among children ages 5 to 11 once it's authorized, which is expected in the coming weeks.

The Pfizer vaccine is the

only one now authorized in the U.S. for adolescents. Moderna has requested authorization of its vaccine but has yet to receive it. Johnson & Johnson is testing its inoculation in teens.

The CDC studied 19 pediatric hospitals in 16 states and found that 97% of the 179 adolescents hospitalized were unvaccinated, 77 of them (43%) had to be admitted to intensive care, and two died. Among six vaccinated adolescents who were hospitalized, none went to the ICU and none died.

United States has now surpassed 45 million cases

The U.S. reported its 45 millionth coronavirus case Monday, Johns Hopkins University data shows. Half the cases have been reported since Jan. 9, when vaccinations began.

More than 189 million Americans – 57% of the population – are fully vaccinated, according to the CDC.

Contributing: Jorge L. Ortiz, Ryan W. Miller, Celina Tebor, The Associated Press

Vaccine

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last far longer than vaccination alone, he said, though that hasn't been proven yet.

Greene warns against seeking out infection to get such good protection, though. Severe disease is no fun and can strike anyone.

Infectious disease expert Dr. Monica Gandhi said public health officials too often downplay the protection provided by infection.

"To deny natural immunity does not generate trust," said Gandhi, an infectious disease expert at the University of California, San Francisco and San Francisco General Hospital.

Getting vaccinated three months – or even better, six months – after infection provides the best possible protection, she said. But a second shot offers almost no additional benefit over the first, nor do people who have been fully vaccinated and infected need a booster at this point.

"If you're naturally immune, get one dose," Gandhi said.

In a new study from the Rockefeller Institute in New York, researchers found that people who get vaccinated after catching COVID-19 may be protected against a wider range of variants than people who get vaccinated alone.

Still, said Theodora Hatzioannou, an author on the study, if you have to pick one, go with vaccination.

Shots, she said, lead to higher levels of neutralizing antibodies, naturally made substances that fight an infection. Neutralizing antibodies wane with time, so the more you start out with, the better.

There are still open questions when it comes to natural immunity and the protection it

affords. It's not clear, for instance, how soon someone can get infected with COVID-19 a second time.

The CDC "is actively working to learn more about reinfection to inform public health action," according to spokesperson Kristen Nordlund.

For young, healthy people, an infection may provide 80% to 90% protection against a reinfection, she said. But in older adults and those who are immunocompromised, an infection may be less protective.

In Denmark, of nearly 12,000 people who tested positive during the first wave of coronavirus infections last year, more than 80% were protected in the second surge. But among those 65 and older, protection against repeat infection was only 47%. Protection didn't seem to fade over time.

Milder or asymptomatic infections may provide less protection than severe ones.

Unvaccinated people who had COVID-19 are more than twice as likely as fully vaccinated people to get COVID-19 again, Nordlund said.

Studies are still being done, she said, to better understand whether repeat infections are milder than initial ones.

"One would expect so," Hatzioannou said.

But variants might make a difference. For example, she said, blood from people previously infected with the so-called beta coronavirus variant might not be able to fight the delta variant as well as people infected with the virus in its original form.

Jeffrey Shaman, an infectious disease epidemiologist at Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health, said it's frustrating to be this far into the pandemic and still have so little understanding of repeat infections.

Though it should be relatively easy to count how many people get infected after vaccination – data the CDC stopped collecting this spring – it's much more challenging to learn how many people are getting repeat infections. If they're not very sick, he said, they are unlikely to report those infections.

Early studies suggested some people were developing different types of immune responses to infection, he said. Some developed protection against the virus' spike protein, the same target of vaccines. They seemed less likely to develop a repeat infection.

But it's possible that as the virus that causes COVID-19 continues to evolve, another variant will come along and people whose immune systems responded to a different part of the virus will be better protected, he said.

Dr. Robert Glatter, an emergency physician at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City, said he worries about patients who had a severe reaction to COVID-19 the first time.

He has seen a number of patients whose symptoms are worse with a second infection, perhaps because they have immune cells that are "primed to respond in an exaggerated or more aggressive fashion."

Countries that have tried to rely on natural infections to slow the spread of the virus, such as Brazil and Iran, have failed, Glatter said. "There is no country in the world where natural infection and natural immunity has slowed the pace of the pandemic."

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Catholics

Continued from Page 1A

Latino Catholics have one of the highest COVID-19 vaccination rates among major U.S. religious groups, according to a Pew Research Center survey. The study of 10,000 adults revealed that 86% of Hispanic Catholics said they were at least partially vaccinated, higher than white Catholics (79%) and second only to atheists (90%). Overall, about 79% of all U.S. adults are partially vaccinated, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The study comes amid ethical questions on research and manufacture of certain vaccines using cell lines from aborted fetuses. Catholic leaders, though strongly opposed to abortion, have taken differing positions on mandates and religious exemptions.

A letter by four Colorado bishops in August declared support for some vaccines but strongly opposed mandates.

By contrast, the archdioceses of New York, Los Angeles and Philadelphia have urged their priests not to provide reli-

gious exemptions to vaccines.

Tadeusz Pacholczyk, director of education at the National Catholic Bioethics Center, a research center in Philadelphia, said vaccine hesitancy among Catholics stemmed less from concerns over aborted fetal cell lines and more from fears over the speed in which the vaccines were developed and general mistrust of government and pharmaceutical companies.

The Bioethics Center has posted information to help readers reach a decision and advocated against vaccine mandates that don't allow for some exemptions, he said.

"There's still quite a bit of polarization, quite a bit of discussion," Pacholczyk said. "It reflects society at large. ... Differences outside the Catholic Church are also seen inside the Catholic Church."

Hispanic Catholics harbored concerns over vaccines earlier this year, but their outlook sharply changed by the summer. Acceptance of vaccines by Latino Catholics jumped from 56% in March to 80% in June – the most dramatic increase of any religious group, according to surveys by the Public Religion Research

Institute. At points throughout the pandemic, Latinos experienced the second-highest number of COVID-19 deaths, trailing Black Americans or American Indians and Alaska Natives.

Vaccines got a major boost in August when Pope Francis, along with six U.S. and Latin American archbishops and cardinals, put out a video supporting inoculations.

"Getting vaccinated is a simple yet profound way to care for one another, especially the most vulnerable," said the pope, the church's first Latino pontiff.

The message resonated among Catholics, especially those in the Latino community who had been hard hit, said Gustavo Garcia-Siller, archbishop of San Antonio. One parish had 95 funerals last year, many of them linked to COVID-19, he said.

García-Siller partnered with local health groups and leaders to organize vaccinations. The efforts paid off: San Antonio health officials recently announced that the city had counted 76% of eligible residents as fully vaccinated and 91% having received at least one shot.

Police unions push back on mandates

Disagreement with mayor goes public in Chicago

Celina Tebor and Grace Hauck

USA TODAY

As COVID-19 vaccine mandate deadlines loom over police departments nationwide, law enforcement leaders and politicians must weigh whether defiant officers can keep their jobs amid an already-depleted police force.

In Chicago, the police union and mayor have publicly feuded over a citywide vaccine mandate. The deadline for city employees to report their vaccination status was last Friday. More than one-third of Chicago police officers didn't do so, according to city data.

A "very small number" of Chicago officers declined additional opportunities to report their vaccination status Monday, Mayor Lori Lightfoot said. They were sent home without pay and could face disciplinary action.

Lightfoot accused the union of spreading misinformation and doubt about the reporting process, which asks for vaccination status and allows for a temporary window of regular coronavirus testing at the employee's own expense until vaccines can be administered.

"Whatever (they've) been told, frankly in many instances they weren't told the truth, and so there is I think an eye-opening moment for many people that this actually is a pretty straightforward nonintrusive process," Lightfoot said. "Our young men and women at the police department are smarter than maybe they've been given credit for. They're not going to risk their careers by being in-subordinate and having in their jackets the fact that they defied a direct order of their supervisors."

Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown threatened in a memo to fire officers who don't comply with the policy, adding that those who retire rather than adhere to the requirements might be putting their retirement benefits at risk.

Chicago Police Union President John Catanzara urged members not to report their vaccination status. The head of the Baltimore police union did the same, The Baltimore Sun reported.

"It is understandable that our members have questions about a policy with so little

information being provided by the city," Baltimore Sgt. Mike Mancuso wrote in a letter to union members. "Until the city responds to our right to bargain these issues, or the courts intervene, I suggest you do nothing in regard to revealing your vaccination status as it is outlined in the city's policy."

In the Pacific Northwest, tensions are coming to a head as Oregon's state and Seattle's city employees faced losing their jobs early Tuesday if they don't comply with vaccine mandates.

Seattle's police department has lost more than 300 officers over the past year, according to Mike Solan, the union's president. Last week, Seattle's police department sent detectives and nonpatrol officers to respond to emergency calls because of a shortage of patrol officers.

Solan told The Associated Press he expects another "mass exodus" of Seattle police officers as the vaccine mandate takes effect.

Police departments nationwide have been experiencing staffing shortages since before vaccine mandates took place. According to a report from the nonprofit National Police Foundation, 86% of law enforcement agencies nationwide reported a staffing shortage in 2020.

A combination of calls to defund the police after the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans at the hands of law enforcement, along with the COVID-19 pandemic, led to some of the biggest police budget cuts in a decade last year.

COVID-19 is the leading cause of death for law enforcement officers in the U.S., according to the Officer Down Memorial Page, a nonprofit that tracks police deaths. The nation's top infectious disease physician noted that statistic as he urged police officers to get vaccinated in an interview with Fox News on Sunday.

"I'm not comfortable with telling people what they should do under normal circumstances, but we are not in normal circumstances right now," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. "Think about the implications of not getting vaccinated when you're in a position where you have a responsible job and you want to protect yourself because you're needed at your job, whether you're a police officer or a pilot or any other of those kinds of occupations."

Contributing: The Associated Press

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