

Melbourne man joins class-action lawsuit against federal mask mandate for air travelers

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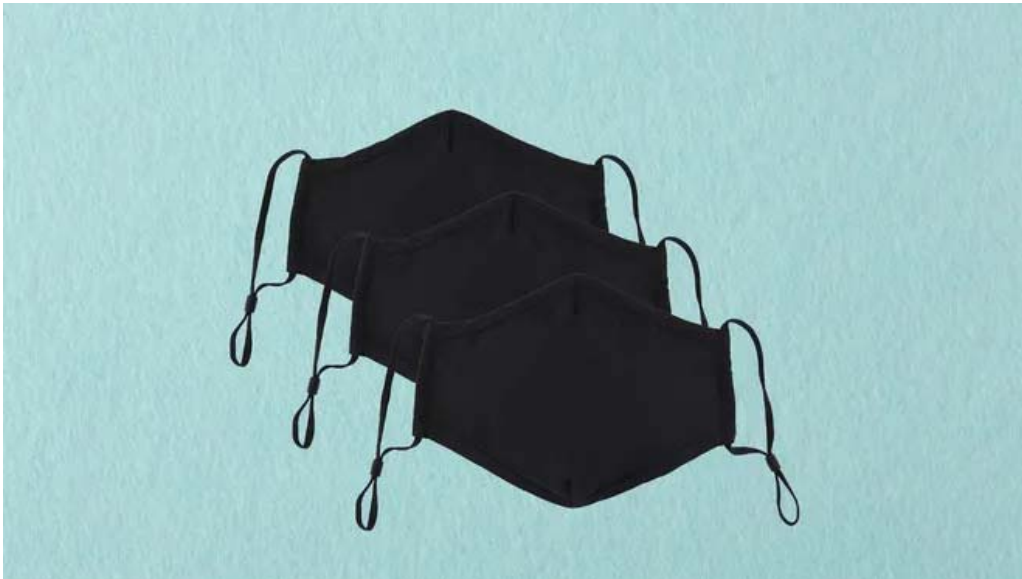
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A Melbourne resident fighting for the right to 'breathe freely,' has joined a class-action lawsuit to stop a federal mask mandate for commercial flight travelers to help curb the coronavirus.

The lawsuit — which says the Biden administration is violating the Constitutional rights of travelers with the restrictions — was filed by Washington, D.C. resident Lucas Wall in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida in Orlando.

Wall was stranded in The Villages after he was not allowed to board a flight in Orlando when he declined to wear a face mask to comply with the federal mandate.



“The co-plaintiffs read about it and contacted me. I’ve actually had hundreds of people contact me, so I picked a dozen people,” said Wall, a frequent-flyer who filed the 227-page complaint against President Biden, seven airlines, and the government.

Wall is seeking a permanent injunction to stop airlines from requiring face masks to be worn during flights. The U.S. Department of Justice has filed a motion defending the mandate.

Wall said he has general anxiety disorder and attempts of wearing a mask have brought on symptoms of a panic attack. He carries a special card, according to the lawsuit.

Leo McDonnell, who lived in San Antonio, Texas, and moved to Melbourne over the summer, said he joined the lawsuit after flying on Delta earlier this year for a basketball team tryout and being confronted about not wearing a mask.

“There are individuals like myself who find this idea of wearing masks to be challenging. I have asthma and a deviated septum. I also have been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder stemming from psychological childhood abuse,” the 28-year-old said.

He said that in January, he booked a flight on Delta and had an understanding that he was medically cleared to fly without a mask. But that changed after he got on board and was confronted by flight attendants about masking up.

“On the flight back from Detroit, the flight attendants told me to put it on. They said there were no exemptions. It’s almost like it was set up like that on purpose,” he said. “It’s like they were telling me my condition didn’t matter.”

McDonnell, who said he is not vaccinated and has never had COVID-19, said he moved to Melbourne because he had heard that the area was less restrictive than most with regard to wearing a mask.

“It’s paradise here,” he said. “I have no problem with people wearing masks, but we do have individual sovereignty.”

Wall agreed.

“(McDonnell’s) case is a good illustration of what disabled people face when they try to fly under this mask mandate. He says it was cleared by Delta, but what you find is that a lot of flight attendants ignore that.”

Wall said the federal lawsuit is only dealing with the mask mandate for travelers, not other controversies involving vaccinations.

“First, to make things clear, our case has nothing to do with vaccines. Second, in terms of masks, the federal government mask mandate violates numerous provisions in the Constitution. This is a civil liberty issue. Some of us can’t have our source of oxygen blocked.”

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