

Faculti Summary

<https://faculti.net/choose-your-medicine/>

The speaker is a law professor with a focus on food and drug regulation, who is also a historian. They have been researching and teaching about the Abigail Alliance case, which addresses the question of whether terminally ill patients have the right to access unapproved drugs. This video issue of medical freedom is deeply rooted in American history, as explored in the speaker's book which spans from the American Revolution to present-day.

The speaker highlights how concepts of medical freedom have evolved, beginning in the Jacksonian era of the 1830s when a movement led by botanical medicine practitioners dismantled the existing medical licensing system, thus prioritizing patient access to alternative treatments. Despite later resurgences of medical licensing, they maintained some protections for non-orthodox medicine.

The speaker discusses significant historical movements, including the 1970s cancer cure craze and the AIDS movement of the 1980s, which sought freedom in medical choices. They also examine the recent success of medical marijuana as part of a broader medical freedom movement.

Through various lenses, including bodily and economic freedoms, religious freedom, and freedom of inquiry, the speaker describes a longstanding American commitment to medical choice, which complicates contemporary healthcare reform efforts. They reveal how historical skepticism towards medical establishment and expertise persists, particularly evident during the COVID-19 pandemic where calls for access to unproven treatments mirrored earlier movements for medical freedom.

Finally, the speaker critiques the paradox of expecting comprehensive healthcare reform in the context of the persistent demand for therapeutic freedom, and highlights the unusual political coalitions that form around medical freedom rhetoric across the political spectrum. The book aims to show that the current climate of medical skepticism and demand for choice is not new but a return to American norms.