

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 26, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

We write with great concern regarding your administration's continued COVID-19 vaccine mandate for service members. The federal vaccine mandate has done and will continue to do significant, long-lasting harm and degradation, not only to our nation's military readiness, but also to the trust in our scientific and government institutions. After long-term study, we know scientifically there have been some mixed results with the vaccines' efficacy in all populations. Recently, in fact, Dr. Anthony Fauci noted the vaccines do not protect "overly well" against infection.¹ With the waning efficacy and durability of vaccine-induced immunity, forcing service members, who are by and large a healthy and not an "at risk" population, to be inoculated with no certainty of preventing infection or spread, while concurrently sowing seeds of division and discord, is absolutely wrong.

It is the consensus that the development of vaccines and therapeutics have saved lives. That said, there is a growing body of evidence that shows there have been serious side effects related directly to vaccination. Vaccines have historically been given to those at high risk to prevent severe disease. They have done that for this particular virus. However, as we have seen and even as Dr. Fauci has agreed, the specific vaccines against COVID-19 have had mixed results against preventing transmission of the virus.

The federal vaccine mandate has been a divisive and not scientifically reasoned public health decision. At one point, you, as President of the United States, as well as Dr. Fauci, the head medical officer in charge of this pandemic, stated you would be against forced vaccination.² The subsequent order of mandated vaccination among military service members has led to significant consternation among service members and their families. In a similar environment, the Supreme Court has even blocked the implementation of such a mandate and testing requirements for large employers. It is past time we end the unscientific assault on the liberties of those who have sworn to defend this nation with their lives.

While there is precedent for service-wide vaccinations in the military, given this particular virus, and now in the era of therapeutics, this rationale no longer exists for COVID-19. If a service member were to become sick from this virus, medication can be administered

¹ Fox News. (2022, July 12). Fauci admits that COVID-19 vaccines do not protect "overly well" against infection. Retrieved from <https://www.foxnews.com/media/fauci-admits-covid-19-vaccines-protect-overly-well-infection>

² BBC. (2020, December 5). Joe Biden: Covid vaccination in US will not be mandatory. Retrieved from <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-55193939>

immediately to treat the virus. Our military members are arguably the most fit and healthy individuals in the American populace. They by and large do not represent a population at risk to severe COVID-19 disease. We know individuals over the age of 65 and those with underlying health conditions such as heart or lung disease are particularly susceptible to severe disease or death. With the average age of an enlisted service member being 27 and the unique physical requirements that are demanded of our services members, they are not categorized as an at-risk population, and thus it is grossly unjust to subject them to a COVID-19 vaccine mandate. It shall be noted that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Vaccine Safety Datalink documents an increased risk of myocarditis and pericarditis among men ages 18-39.³ While some deem this risk acceptable, in light of a healthy population, this is simply not the case.

Forced coercion is simply unjustifiable as recent data has shown that Omicron has presented vaccine efficacy concerns. Prior infection and vaccination have previously shown to elicit a comparable protection against symptomatic infection. As published, previous infection without vaccination showed a 50.2% effectiveness against symptomatic Omicron BA.1 infection, while a two-dose vaccination with previous infection elicited 51.7% effectiveness.⁴ Furthermore, a recent publication studying the level of protection natural infection provides against reinfection shows that, "protection from natural infection against reinfection and serious disease is comparable to vaccine-induced protection in terms of magnitude and duration."⁵

The unscientific and divisive mandate raises significant national security concerns. Your administration's mandate is decimating recruitment numbers, which the New York Times even notes has played a role in diminishing recruitment.⁶ We have lost thousands of active-duty service members as well as thousands of individuals in the National Guard because of these mandates. Our special operators, pilots and men and women throughout the service branches take years to train – losing these individuals not only degrades present day readiness, but also ends up costing this nation millions, if not billions of dollars, to train new service members. These losses and the losses of significant experience of service members cannot be recovered overnight.

Lastly, given the heightened increase in global tensions, such actions that degrade our military preparedness, for no scientific reason whatsoever, places the security of the United States at a significant disadvantage. With Russia's despicable assault on Ukraine, China's continued economic espionage, as well as Iran's unmitigated nuclear ambitions, your

³ Shimabukuro T. (2022, February 4). Updates on myocarditis and pericarditis following Moderna COVID-19 vaccination [Internet]. Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices. Available from:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2022-02-04/03-COVID-Shimabukuro508.pdf>

⁴ Altarawneh HN et al. Effects of previous infection and vaccination on symptomatic omicron infections *N Engl J Med* 2022 Jun 15; [e-pub]. <https://doi.org/10.1056/NEJMoa2203965>

⁵ Michlmayr, D., Hansen, C. H., et. al. (2022, June 30). Observed protection against SARS-CoV-2 reinfection following a primary infection: A Danish cohort study among unvaccinated using two years of nationwide PCR-test data. Retrieved from <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666776222001466?via%3Dihub>

⁶ Philipps, D. (2022, July 14). With Few Able and Fewer Willing, U.S. Military Can't Find Recruits. Retrieved from <https://www.nytimes.com/2022/07/14/us/us-military-recruiting-enlistment.html>

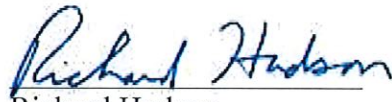
administration is effectively handcuffing our nation's ability to respond to global threats. It has also placed honorable men and women, who have sworn an oath to defend this nation, in a horrible predicament – either be forcefully coerced into inoculation or be discharged for exercising the freedoms that each of us bestow as Americans. There is simply no scientific reason or national interest to continue this absurdity.

We urge you to immediately withdraw the federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate on our service members.

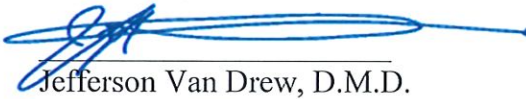
Sincerely,



Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.
Member of Congress



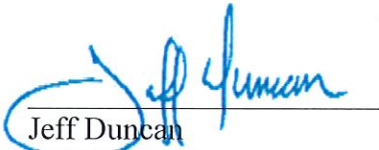
Richard Hudson
Member of Congress



Jefferson Van Drew, D.M.D.
Member of Congress



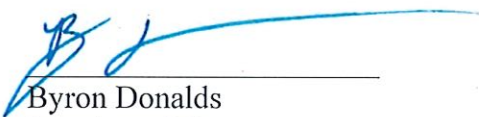
Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



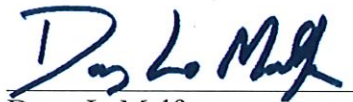
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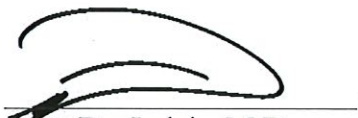
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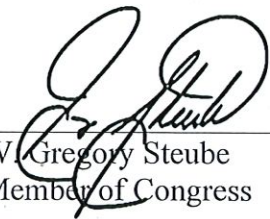


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