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September 20, 2021

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Biden:

I am writing today to raise my concern following your September 9, 2021 announcements on vaccine mandates for private employers, Federal employees, and Federal contractors. These policies are irresponsible and exceed the power of your office. My family and I have chosen to be vaccinated, I think it is appropriate for public officials to promote sound medical advice for the general public while respecting an individual's ability to make their own medical decisions. There are myriad reasons why some individuals may choose to not get vaccinated. The Administration's actions severely undercut Americans' liberty to weigh their options and make the best decisions for themselves and their families.

In particular, this mandate demonstrates a callousness toward the countless Americans who cannot be vaccinated based on their sincerely held religious beliefs, despite robust statutory protections for such accommodations. Further, these actions have belittled the difficulty of pregnant women, disabled individuals, and Americans undergoing treatment for countless medical conditions, including cancer, who are making reasonable judgements about what is best for their own health based on the information that is currently available. This Administration must defer these important decisions to individuals as they consult with their healthcare providers; instead, you have chosen to use the bully-pulpit of the White House to divide Americans between your definition of the vaccinated being "good" and the unvaccinated as "bad." You are even threatening to remove Federal employees who choose to not be vaccinated.

As you know, more than 39 million Americans have contracted and recovered from COVID-19. These individuals have differing degrees of natural immunity and many may present no greater risk of getting infected again or infecting others than their vaccinated neighbors. Your Administration has chosen to disregard natural immunity even though your vaccine mandate could push some individuals out of their career jobs.

In light of the concerns mentioned above, please provide full and detailed responses to the following questions by October 4, 2020:

- 1) What legal authority does your Administration have to mandate private sector employers require their employees to be vaccinated? Likewise, under what legal authority does your

Administration have to change the terms of employment for Federal workers by mandating they be vaccinated?

- 2) What processes are in place for individuals who cannot receive the vaccine due to a sincerely held religious belief to receive an accommodation? Please include information about how your administration is working to ensure that employers are aware of and complying with the requirements to allow for such accommodations. Please provide separate answers for private sector employees, Federal employees, and Federal contractors.
- 3) What process are you providing for individuals with medical conditions, such as pregnancy or cancer, who wish to receive an accommodation? Please provide separate answers for private sector employees, federal employees, and federal contractors.
- 4) Did your Administration consider exempting those with natural immunity acquired from previous COVID-19 infection from these mandates? Please fully explain your decision-making process as it relates to natural immunity and the science behind your decision. What is your justification for mandating the previously infected also be vaccinated, since vaccinated individuals also can experience breakthrough infections?

This Administration's words and policies fall far short of what Americans deserve from their government. The majority of Americans have already chosen to be vaccinated, including 82.5% of those age 65 and older. Your one-size-fits-all policy is unnecessary and places millions of Americans in the previously unthinkable position of choosing between their conscience, their health, and their job. I implore you to reform your rhetoric and revise your policies.

In God We Trust,



James Lankford
U.S. Senator

cc:

Secretary Martin J. Walsh
U.S. Department of Labor

Acting Director Shalanda Young
Office of Management and Budget

Director Kiran Ahuja
U.S. Office of Personnel Management