



Congress of the United States House of Representatives

CHAIRMAN
CONGRESSIONAL WESTERN CAUCUS

November 4, 2021

William Collins
797 Stevens Dr
Richland, WA 99352-4108

Dear Mr. Collins,

Thank you for contacting me regarding your thoughts on ongoing government mandates in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is important for me to hear from constituents as I work in Congress representing the people of Washington's 4th District. I truly appreciate you reaching out and sharing your views on this important issue.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed the American spirit of ingenuity and innovation in action to develop and distribute vaccinations against the coronavirus. Thanks to Operation Warp Speed, our world-class private sector scientists and researchers worked hand-in-hand with government regulators to secure approval for these vaccines more than five times quicker than the fastest vaccine ever developed. This is truly a remarkable achievement for our country, and I urge all residents of Central Washington to consult with their physician to determine the best options for them.

As you may know, President Biden issued an executive order on September 9, 2021, which institutes mandatory vaccinations or weekly testing for the federal workforce and entities that employ more than 100 people. Similarly, on September 3, 2021, Governor Inslee issued an order mandating vaccination of all state employees, K-12 and higher education professionals, public and private healthcare workers, and public and private long term care providers. Additionally, bureaucrats and government officials continue to promulgate mask mandates and other restrictions that are counterintuitive and harmful to children, families, and businesses.

I introduced H.R. 5741, the *Options Over Terminations Act*, on October 26, 2021. This legislation would provide an exemption to any Federal COVID-19 vaccine mandate for any Federal employee or contractor who provides proof of COVID-19 antibodies. Federal employees who have opted not to receive the vaccine because they have natural immunity developed after recovering from the virus do not deserve to be fired. President Biden's overreaching mandate has severe ramifications for communities across the country, especially for communities like Central Washington who make up a large part of the federal workforce. Instead of forcing our federal workforce to choose between employment and vaccination, my bill provides them with an option – a permissible, science-based exception from President Biden's recent Executive Order. I will continue working towards swift passage of the *Options Over Terminations Act*, to ensure that our

federal response to COVID-19 is based on science and does not needlessly cripple our economy or essential government functions.

While I will continue to encourage all those who can to be vaccinated as soon as possible, I also believe that this decision is a highly personal one, with many issues of conscience and health to be considered. I do not support mandatory vaccines and believe that such intimate health decisions should be made between patients and their doctors, without government interference. Furthermore, I remain committed to reopening our economy and providing Americans with the necessary information to make the best informed safety decisions for themselves.

If you have additional questions about the COVID-19 vaccine or are looking to schedule an appointment, please visit [vaccines.gov](https://www.vaccines.gov) to find further information and resources.

I hope you will continue to be in contact as Congress debates the many important issues facing our country. Thank you again for taking the time to share your concerns with me—I am always glad to hear from constituents of the 4th District. It is an honor and privilege to serve you in Congress.

Sincerely,



Rep. Dan Newhouse
Member of Congress