

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 27, 2021

Hon. Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
Department of Homeland Security
2707 Martin Luther King Jr. Ave SE
Washington, D.C. 20258-0525

Dear Secretary Mayorkas:

We write with grave concern regarding your department's plans to fire unvaccinated Border Patrol agents and other employees responsible for securing our borders and enforcing our immigration laws. Specifically, we take issue with your intent to enforce President Biden's Executive Order on mandatory vaccines for federal employees.

Under this mandate, Border Patrol agents who choose not to vaccinate against COVID-19 would be subject to termination as early as next month. As the deadline approaches, many agents have expressed frustration with an ultimatum that pits them between a vaccine they do not want or risk losing their jobs.

Our men and women in the Border Patrol have worked tirelessly to manage the crisis at our southern border. This year especially, they have been subject to extraordinary amounts of mental and physical stress. With morale at an all-time low, this mandate will serve as a last straw for agents who can easily leave the agency for other law enforcement organizations at the state and local level or retire.

It takes more than 400 days for applicants to go through the hiring process. New recruits then have over 20 weeks of training at the Border Patrol Academy. It would be impractical to rely on additional recruiting for anticipated shortages. The reality is that Border Patrol has long suffered a net loss in employment and continues to experience high attrition rates. With vacancies at an all-time high, the Administration should instead be focused on retaining an already-limited workforce, especially in the middle of the worst crisis to ever hit our southern border.

If this vaccine mandate is enforced without any flexibility, we can expect an untold number of additional vacancies across our border. At this point, no agent is expendable given the crisis we are facing, but there is talk that Customs and Border Protection may claim that having any number of unvaccinated employees will create an undue burden on the agency, opening the door for an untold number of employees to be removed from federal service.

We strongly urge you to carefully consider the reasonable accommodation requests of agents who have either medical or religious issues with the vaccine. We believe that these reservations are genuine and heartfelt. Furthermore, these agents who do have medical or religious issues can easily be tested on a regular basis as many corporations are now doing with their employees. In addition to the regular testing, the department can require them to wear N95 masks to protect themselves and others. At a time when the need for employee retention is at its most critical, we cannot afford to lose even one agent to this mandate.

We appreciate your urgent attention to this matter and await a response.

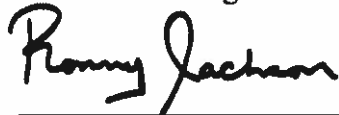
Sincerely,



Tony Gonzales
Member of Congress



Brian Babin, D.D.S
Member of Congress



Ronny L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Michael C. Burgess, M.D.
Member of Congress



Glenn Grothman
Member of Congress



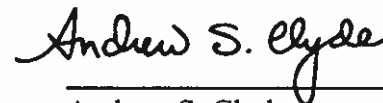
Beth Van Duyne
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Elise Stefanik
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William R. Timmons, IV
Member of Congress



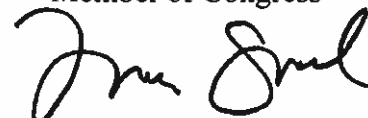
Andrew S. Clyde
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Member of Congress



Ben Cline
Member of Congress



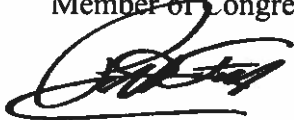
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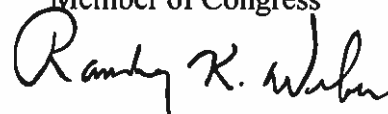
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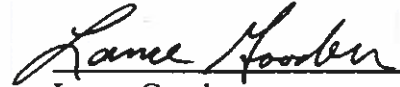
Claudia Tenney
Member of Congress



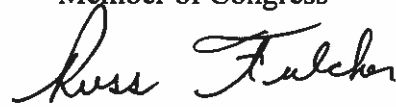
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