

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5051  
MINORITY (202) 225-5074  
<https://oversight.house.gov>

January 10, 2022

The Honorable Muriel Bowser  
Mayor of the District of Columbia  
1350 Pennsylvania Ave NW #406  
Washington, D.C. 20004

Dear Mayor Bowser:

We write to express our concern about the vaccine mandate (the Order) you issued requiring proof of coronavirus vaccination for entry into most indoor premises in the District of Columbia (the District or D.C.).<sup>1</sup> Like the Democrat lockdowns of 2020, the latest left-wing vaccine passport fad will not prevent the virus from spreading. This sweeping mandate, however, will harm the District's economic recovery and lock many Americans out of their capital city. We urge you to withdraw the Order.

Beginning on January 15, 2022, Order 2021-148 prohibits anyone over the age of twelve from entering an indoor facility without "displaying proof of vaccination against COVID-19[.]"<sup>2</sup> By February 15, all people over twelve years old will be required to be "fully vaccinated" to enter indoor venues.<sup>3</sup> The Order does not provide exemption for those who would produce a negative test result or for those who have developed natural immunity to the coronavirus, which numerous studies have shown is equally effective as the vaccine.<sup>4</sup>

The spread of the omicron variant among the vaccinated population indicates the Order will be ineffective at stopping viral spread while imposing significant costs to the District, its residents, its economy, and Americans across the nation who wish to visit their capital.<sup>5</sup> Available data evaluating omicron's virulence shows it appears relatively mild.<sup>6</sup> In South Africa—where the omicron variant was first reported—only about 23.8 percent of the population

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<sup>1</sup> *Vaccination Requirement for Entrance into Certain Indoor Establishments and Facilities*, Mayor's Order 2021-148 (Dec. 22, 2021).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> VaxDC, Government of the District of Columbia (Dec. 29, 2021), available at <https://coronavirus.dc.gov/vaxdc>.

<sup>4</sup> Marty Makary, *Natural immunity to covid is powerful. Policymakers seem afraid to say so*, WASH. POST (Sept. 15, 2021).

<sup>5</sup> *Omicron Variant: What You Need to Know*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (updated Dec. 20, 2021), available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/variants/omicron-variant.html>.

<sup>6</sup> Noah Weiland, *Federal Officials Say Early Omicron Data Suggests a Less Deadly Wave*, N.Y. TIMES (Dec. 29, 2021).

has been fully vaccinated.<sup>7</sup> But data suggests “the variant has not caused a corresponding jump in hospitalizations and death.”<sup>8</sup> Orders, similar to the D.C. Order, from around the country such as those in New York, Philadelphia, and San Francisco have been ineffective at stopping the latest surge of infections in those cities and the states in which they are located.<sup>9</sup>

By requiring D.C. businesses to enforce the Order, the D.C. government (whose buildings are, by and large, exempt from the Order) will strain the District’s economic recovery. According to a report prepared for the D.C. Chamber of Commerce, as of June 2021, nearly half the small businesses that operated in January 2020 were closed and revenue was down by about 57 percent.<sup>10</sup> Committee staff recently spoke with D.C. Chief Financial Officer Fitzroy Lee, who estimated 20 percent of D.C. revenue comes from its collection of sales tax and 25 percent from income tax. Moreover, he told staff that hotel revenues were still down 33 percent and restaurant revenues were still down 25 percent. Both of these streams of revenue will be further diminished if D.C. businesses continue to close.

This is another draconian measure against children—a group that has unfairly suffered at the hands of liberal educators and the institutions they serve throughout this pandemic. In particular, school groups visiting D.C. will be prohibited from taking advantage of our nation’s treasures. According to the CDC, just over half of 12-17 year olds have received two doses of the vaccine.<sup>11</sup> By requiring anyone over the age of twelve to present proof of vaccination to enter most indoor establishments in the District, students who are not vaccinated will be prohibited from eating at restaurants, meeting indoors for conferences, enjoying entertainment venues, and more. All Americans, especially our youth, should be welcomed to the District, but your sweeping mandate locks them out of their capital city.

To better understand the District’s vaccine mandate, please provide a briefing to the Committee no later than January 18, 2022. To arrange the briefing or ask any questions about this request, please contact Committee staff at (202) 225-5074.

The Committee on Oversight and Reform is the principal oversight Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X.

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<sup>7</sup> *Covid 19 Tracker: South Africa*, REUTERS (updated Dec. 30, 2021), available at <https://graphics.reuters.com/world-coronavirus-tracker-and-maps/countries-and-territories/south-africa/>.

<sup>8</sup> Joseph Choi, *South Africa's Omicron peak has passed with no major spike in deaths*, The Hill (Dec. 30, 2021).

<sup>9</sup> *Coronavirus in the U.S.: Latest Map and Case Count*, N.Y. TIMES (updated Dec. 30, 2021).

<sup>10</sup> *2021 State of Business Report: Building Back*, D.C. Policy Center (produced for the DC Chamber of Commerce) (Oct. 4, 2021), available at <https://www.dcpolicycenter.org/publications/2021-state-of-business/>.

<sup>11</sup> *COVID-19 Vaccination and Case Trends by Age Group, United States*, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, available at <https://data.cdc.gov/Vaccinations/COVID-19-Vaccination-and-Case-Trends-by-Age-Group-/gxj9-t96f>.

Sincerely,



James Comer  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Oversight and Reform



Ralph Norman  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Environment



Jody Hice  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Government Operations



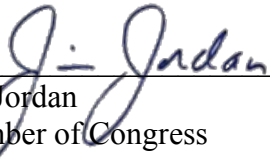
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Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on National Security



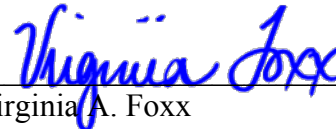
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Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Economic and  
Consumer Policy



Nancy Mace  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and  
Civil Liberties



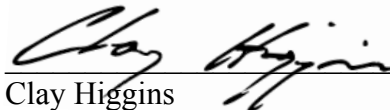
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Member of Congress



Virginia A. Foxx  
Member of Congress



Bob Gibbs  
Member of Congress



Clay Higgins  
Member of Congress



Pete Sessions  
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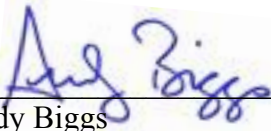


Fred Keller  
Member of Congress

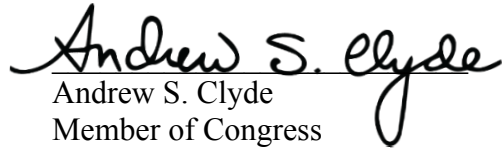
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Andy Biggs  
Member of Congress



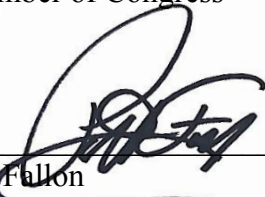
Andrew S. Clyde  
Member of Congress



Scott Franklin  
Member of Congress



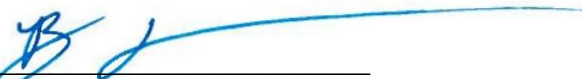
Jake LaTurner  
Member of Congress



Pat Fallon  
Member of Congress



Yvette Herrell  
Member of Congress



Byron Donalds  
Member of Congress

cc: The Honorable Carolyn Maloney, Chairwoman  
Committee on Oversight and Reform

The Honorable Ro Khanna, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Environment

The Honorable Gerald E. Connolly, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Government Operations

The Honorable Stephen F. Lynch, Chairman  
Subcommittee on National Security

The Honorable Raja Krishnamoorthi, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy

The Honorable Jamie Raskin, Chairman  
Subcommittee on Civil Rights and Civil Liberties