

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

August 18, 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 with serious concern about the D.C. Council's COVID-19 vaccination mandate for students over 12 years-old attending school within the District of Columbia.¹ As we have seen over the last year and a half, COVID-19 vaccine mandates fail to prevent the contraction or transmission of COVID-19.² In the face of this science, the D.C. Council's vaccination mandate creates a likelihood that thousands of D.C. schoolchildren will be locked out of learning opportunities this school year, setting these children further behind in their academic progress. We urge you to immediately stop enforcement of this unreasonable and destructive vaccine mandate before D.C. schools return on August 29, 2022. Furthermore, we request a staff-level briefing to understand how D.C. officials intend to enforce this mandate against students who have already been hurt by COVID-19 school closures.

As states across the country have rightfully declined to impose vaccine mandates, D.C. has inexplicably chosen to deviate from this widely-held scientific consensus.³ No jurisdiction in the vicinity of the District requires students to be vaccinated against COVID-19. The Virginia Department of Health declined to mandate COVID-19 vaccines for schoolchildren, and a vaccine requirement is reportedly "not under consideration" in Maryland.⁴ In the metropolitan area, therefore, the District is the only jurisdiction to mandate COVID-19 vaccination for all students ages 12 and older, even as other school systems have chosen to learn from the past two years to avoid failed vaccine mandates.⁵ New Orleans is the only other school district in the country to impose such a mandate on school children.⁶

The D.C. Council's decision to impose a vaccine mandate on its students clearly presents no benefit to public health and will only serve to further harm children. "[N]o influential health group or federal agency is pushing states" to require COVID-19 vaccines for children.⁷ In other

¹ Lauren Lumpkin and Perry Stein, *D.C. schools expand covid vaccine mandate, unlike most other districts*, THE WASH. POST (July 31, 2022).

² House Committee on Oversight and Reform (Republican) Press Release, *Comer, Norman, Oversight Republicans: D.C.'s Vaccine Passport Locks Americans Out of Their Capital City* (Jan. 10, 2022), available at, <https://republicans-oversight.house.gov/release/comer-norman-oversight-republicans-d-c-s-vaccine-passport-locks-americans-out-of-their-capital-city/>.

³ Rachel M. Cohen, *School vaccine mandates for Covid-19 are not happening*, VOX (Aug. 8, 2022).

⁴ Damare Baker, *DC Council Votes to Require Covid-19 Vaccine for Students*, WASHINGTONIAN (Dec. 7, 2021).

⁵ *Supra*, n.3.

⁶ Eliza Holland & Nikki Johnson, *Covid Vaccine Mandates Heighten School Inequity*, WALL ST. J. (Aug. 8, 2022).

⁷ *Id.*

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words, the District is far outside the educational mainstream in mandating a vaccine on school-aged children. According to the *Washington Post*, D.C.'s school mandate "is among the strictest in the nation, according to health experts, and is being enacted in a city with wide disparities in vaccination rates between its White and Black children."⁸ The newspaper, clearly alarmed, stated, "[i]f the city does not close this gap but does strictly enforce the vaccine mandate this fall, students of color—who experienced disproportionately large academic setbacks during the pandemic—could be at home in significant numbers next academic year."⁹


The D.C. Council's decision raises serious questions about why a local government would decline to follow the science and instead choose to place an entire population of youth at further risk of academic decline. The decision to impose such draconian measures on the District's children even conflicts with the guidance of Dr. Anthony Fauci, who recently admitted that the vaccines "don't protect overly well, as it were, against infection."¹⁰ To assist us in conducting important oversight into D.C.'s alarming attempt to expel thousands of students who fail to comply with a vaccine mandate, we request a staff-level briefing as soon as possible, but no later than August 25, 2022.

To make arrangements to schedule the briefing or ask any related follow-up questions, please contact Committee on Oversight and Reform Republican 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. Thank you in advance for your cooperation with this inquiry.

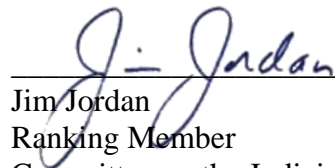
Sincerely,



James Comer
Ranking Member
Committee on Oversight & Reform



Steve Scalise
Ranking Member
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis



Jim Jordan
Ranking Member
Committee on the Judiciary

⁸ *Supra*, n.1.

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ *Fauci admits that COVID-19 vaccines do not protect 'overly well' against infection*, FOX NEWS (July 12, 2022).

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cc: The Honorable Carolyn B. Maloney, Chairwoman
Committee on Oversight & Reform

The Honorable James E. Clyburn
Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis

The Honorable Jerrold L. Nadler
Committee on the Judiciary