



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0603

October 17, 2022

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20006

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas
Secretary of Homeland Security
1201 New York Avenue
Washington, DC 20005

Admiral Linda L. Fagan
Commandant of the United States Coast Guard
2701 Martin Luther King Jr Ave SE
Washington, DC 20593

Dear President Biden, Secretary Mayorkas, and Admiral Fagan:

We write to urge your reconsideration of the United States Coast Guard's (USCG) policy regarding religious exemptions from the COVID-19 vaccination order.

As you know, USCG servicemembers are expected to follow the Defense Department's COVID-19 vaccination order¹ requiring all servicemembers to receive an FDA-approved COVID-19 vaccine. Servicemembers that have not obtained a COVID-19 vaccine risk an involuntary administrative separation. This policy has resulted in hundreds of servicemembers from all branches getting involuntarily discharged.

On September 30, 2022, the White House released a readout² of the phone call with Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Zach Loesch. During this call, President Biden recognized Petty Officer Second Class Loesch's heroic actions in saving a wheelchair-bound woman and her husband during a search and rescue mission following Hurricane Ian.

While the commander-in-chief has recognized Petty Officer Second Class Loesch's outstanding bravery, Mr. Loesch is expecting to be involuntarily discharged for not receiving a COVID-19 vaccination despite requesting a religious exemption.

To date, USCG has received over 1,200 religious exemption requests and has only accepted 12, amounting to a 99% denial rate. This blanket denial of religious accommodation is a clear violation of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act (RFRA). While this administration chooses to prioritize the USCG's new focus on diversity, equity, and inclusion, it is also denying

¹ [Memorandum for Mandatory Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination of Department of Defense Service Members](#)

² [Readout of President Joe Biden's Call with Lieutenant Commander Christopher Hooper and Aviation Survival Technician Second Class Zach Loesch of the U. S. Coast Guard - The White House](#)

servicemembers their most fundamental First Amendment right: the free exercise of religious belief.

Considering Joe Biden's own admission that "the pandemic is over", these mandates are completely unnecessary and are not supported by anything resembling a scientific justification. On August 12, 2022, the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) updated guidance removes the distinction between unvaccinated and vaccinated individuals exposed to COVID-19; the guidance also states that the COVID-19 vaccine does not prevent transmission or contraction.

If the USCG continues to enforce its unnecessary and unconstitutional vaccine mandates, talent like Petty Officer Second Class Loesch will be lost. We urge you to reconsider USCG's position regarding the denial of religious exemption requests and allow these heroes to serve this great country.

Sincerely,



Lauren Boebert
Member of Congress



Chip Roy
Member of Congress



Bill Posey
Member of Congress



Jeff Duncan
Member of Congress



Brian Mast
Member of Congress



Troy Nehls
Member of Congress



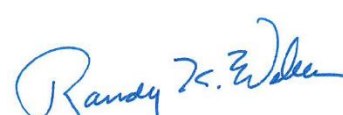
Doug Lamborn
Member of Congress



Ralph Norman
Member of Congress



Andy Biggs
Member of Congress



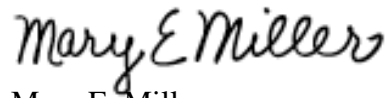
Randy K. Weber
Member of Congress



Diana Harshbarger
Member of Congress



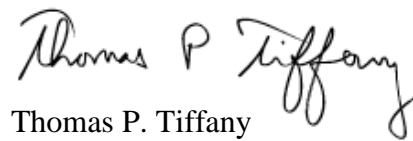
Dan Bishop
Member of Congress



Mary E. Miller
Member of Congress



Paul A. Gosar, D.D.S.
Member of Congress



Thomas P. Tiffany
Member of Congress



Matt Gaetz
Member of Congress



Michael Guest
Member of Congress