

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 22, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin
Secretary
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear President Biden and Secretary Austin:

We write to express our concerns with respect to the impending vaccination deadlines for Department of Defense contractors. We fear that policy makers are chasing direct benefits without respectful consideration of indirect costs. Our defense industrial base is not a monolithic entity – the hardworking patriots who comprise the backbone of the industry come from diverse backgrounds.

As such, though many contract workers have opted to receive vaccination, many have not, and the reasons are abundant. The system for application for a waiver is arcane and for most, seemingly nonexistent. They now face uncertainty in their livelihoods: compromise their concerns about the ethics, efficacy, and safety of the vaccine, or accept termination in employment.

We have, from day one, promulgated CDC and DoD guidance. We have championed the vaccine rollout and battled the surrounding misinformation. But we cannot stand idly by while the DoD makes a mistake that will inevitably compromise national security for decades. Those who adamantly refuse the vaccine will accept termination. We will lose critical experience in skilled labor. We will lose opportunities for mentorship and on-the-job training from veteran craftsmen. In the long-term, we will miss quality control standards. We will face endemic cost overruns and rework as decades of lessons are not passed to the next generation.

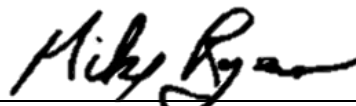
Perhaps most concerning to us lies in the near-term. When the deadlines and cost estimates aren't met, who shoulders the responsibility? If a contractor loses key members of its workforce due to a post-negotiation customer demand, the customer is to blame. The Department of Defense is the customer and will ultimately be at fault when the industrial base falters at a crucial turning point in our deterrence of China.

In this era of strategic competition, everything must be considered a front in an evolving battlespace. Cost-benefit analysis must be applied to every investment, and we do not find this to be one that is sound. We strongly urge you to reconsider the manner in which you are seeking to address this issue so as not to harm the livelihood of civilian contractors, industry partners, and strategic goals of our armed services.

Don't miss the forest for the trees.



ROBERT J. WITTMAN
Member of Congress



MIKE ROGERS
Member of Congress



ELISE STEFANIK
Member of Congress



VICKY HARTZLER
Member of Congress



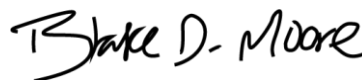
DOUG LAMBORN
Member of Congress



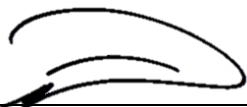
JOE WILSON
Member of Congress



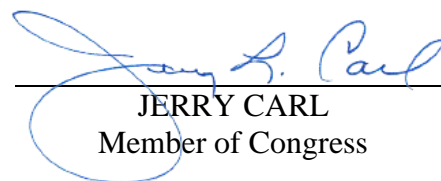
JACK BERGMAN
Member of Congress



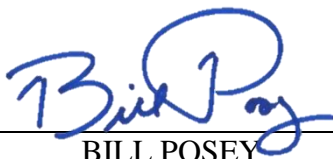
BLAKE MOORE
Member of Congress



SCOTT DESJARLAIS
Member of Congress



JERRY CARL
Member of Congress



BILL POSEY
Member of Congress