

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

November 30, 2022

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Republican Leader
United States Senate

The Honorable John Thune
Republican Whip
United States Senate

The Honorable John Barrasso
Chairman
Republican Conference
United States Senate

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Republican Policy Committee
United States Senate

Dear Leader McConnell and Senators Thune, Barrasso, and Blunt:

We oppose invoking cloture on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, unless the Senate votes on a single amendment to (1) prohibit the involuntary separation of a member of the Armed Forces based solely on a service member's COVID-19 vaccination status and to (2) reinstate those who may have already been separated with back pay. We respectfully request that the Senate Republican leadership whips the question.

The Department of Defense COVID-19 vaccine mandate has ruined the livelihoods of men and women who have honorably served our country. As of April 2022, approximately 3,400 troops have been discharged from the military for refusing to be vaccinated against COVID-19. While the Department of Defense certainly must make decisions that will bolster military readiness, the effects of the mandate are antithetical to readiness of our force, and the policy must be revoked.

The United States simply cannot afford to discharge our brave men and women in uniform and lose the investments we have made into each and every one of them due to an inept bureaucratic policy. While training costs vary between each service, the Army, for example estimates it spends \$15,000 in recruiting costs to bring someone into the service and another \$50,000 to \$75,000 to prepare them to join their first unit, depending on their job. The military also faces challenges with recruitment. Military recruitment is reportedly down 23% from annual targets. Therefore, due to costs and recruiting challenges, losing thousands of troops due to their vaccination status is a readiness issue that the Department should take seriously.

We respectfully request that the Senate vote to remedy a policy that adversely affects our service members and our national security.

Sincerely,



Rand Paul, M.D.
United States Senator



Lindsey O. Graham
United States Senator



Rick Scott
United States Senator



Mike Lee
United States Senator



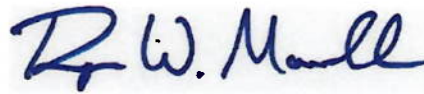
Ted Cruz
United States Senator



Ron Johnson
United States Senator



Mike Braun
United States Senator



Roger Marshall, M.D.
United States Senator



Tommy Tuberville
United States Senator



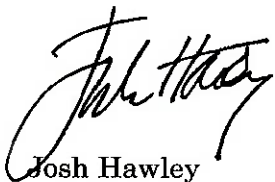
Marco Rubio
United States Senator



Steve Daines
United States Senator



Cindy Hyde-Smith
United States Senator



Josh Hawley
United States Senator