

# U.S. Sen. Johnson: Mandates are exacerbating social divisions and will only increase pandemic harms

Posted on Thursday, Sep 30, 2021

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**WASHINGTON** — On Wednesday, *The Washington Times* published an op-ed by U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson (R-Wis.) regarding President Biden's disregard for individual freedom and his unlawful vaccine mandates for working Americans.

Sen. Johnson sent a [letter](#) on September 15 to Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), Dr. Rochelle Walensky, Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and Dr. Janet Woodcock, Acting Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regarding President Biden's announcement of vaccine mandates in both the public and private sectors without making any exceptions for those who have been previously infected with COVID-19 and have natural immunity.

The full op-ed can be found [here](#), excerpts are below.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been the most disruptive and costly global event since World War II. The human toll and economic devastation are incalculable. The extent of the damage will not be fully felt or known for years. Much of the human toll and cost was self-inflicted and avoidable. The loss of freedom has been breathtaking, with too many accepting this loss without question and little resistance.

Those who have asked questions have been vilified, scorned, suppressed, and censored. There is so much about how governments and societies have responded to the pandemic that simply makes no sense, so legitimate questions and public skepticism continue to grow.

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Well before President Joe Biden's ill-advised and divisive vaccine mandate announcement, I had been hearing from doctors, nurses, first responders, college students, and others facing the life-altering decision of having to choose between losing their job or enrollment or being coerced into taking a vaccine they do not want. Many of these individuals have already been infected and recovered from COVID-19 and have natural immunity, which, unfortunately, is not being recognized in lieu of a vaccine.

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Significant practical problems exist. We are already suffering severe worker shortages throughout our economy, especially in health care. Vaccine mandates will increase these shortages, leading to disastrous consequences. There have already been reports on how mandates could weaken military readiness. I have been inundated with testimonials from health care professionals that paint a dire picture of current shortages and an even more dire future if mandates are enforced.

There continues to be much we don't know about the coronavirus, COVID-19, and COVID-19 vaccines. A little modesty on the part of those in authority admitting they don't possess perfect knowledge or policy prescriptions would be welcome. We have all faced fear, doubt, isolation, and stress throughout the pandemic. We have

been forced to make crucial decisions with partial, imperfect, and often conflicting information. With this in mind, it would also be nice if everyone would afford each other much more respect as we all make difficult, personal choices regarding vaccination. Too much freedom and personal health autonomy have already been lost during the pandemic. Let's not compound that loss with unnecessary vaccine mandates.