

# U.S. Rep. Gallagher: DoD must standardize exemption process for COVID-19 vaccine

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WASHINGTON, D.C.– Rep. Mike Gallagher (R-WI), the Ranking Member of the House Armed Services Committee’s Subcommittee on Military Personnel, today released the following statement regarding the Pentagon’s failures to create a uniform standard for servicemembers looking to receive an exemption from taking the COVID-19 vaccine.

“Last year’s National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) required the Department of Defense to implement a uniform standard under which servicemembers could be exempted from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. Yet contrary to Congressional intent, implementation of these standards is mixed at best and varies widely across the services. The disjointed exemption process is why I included several provisions in this year’s NDAA which further push the Department to implement uniform exemptions, including for religious accommodations, and fight for the hard-earned benefits of servicemembers who are discharged as a result of their refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine. With the services on the cusp of an unprecedented recruiting crisis, the Pentagon cannot drag its feet on this issue any longer.” Rep. Gallagher introduced two amendments to this year’s NDAA relating to COVID-19 exemptions and discharges. These include amendments that would require the Department of Defense to brief Congress on the process in which they have standardized medical and religious exemptions to the vaccine, as well as encourage the Department to upgrade the discharge status for servicemembers who refused the vaccine.

ICYMI: In a [Wall Street Journal editorial](#), Air National Guard lawyer Christopher Motz highlighted the Pentagon’s failure to create these standards and the impact it’s having on servicemembers.