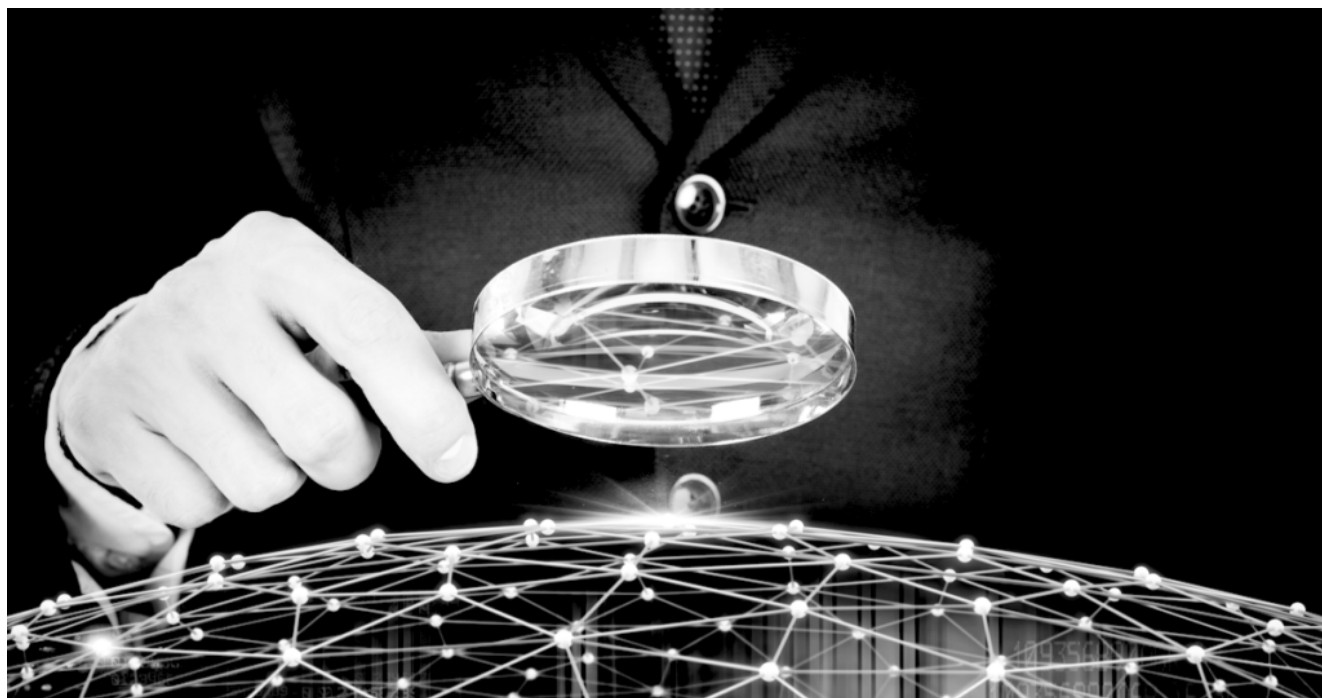


19 Federal Agencies Propose Plans to Track People Who Request Religious Exemptions to COVID Vaccines



Nineteen federal agencies have created or proposed creating [tracking lists](#) for people who request religious exemptions to the COVID vaccine mandates imposed by the Biden administration, raising concerns over privacy, what the administration plans to do with the information, how it will be shared and how it could be used to discriminate against individuals for their political or religious beliefs.

The federal government, through the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency for the District of Columbia (CSOSA) has [announced](#) it will begin tracking all federal employees who file for religious exemptions effective Feb. 10, 2022.

According to the Federal Register, CSOSA will create a database called the "Employee Religious Exception Request

Information System,” to collect religious accommodation requests. This newly established system will be included in the Pretrial Services Agency (PSA) for the District of Columbia Privacy Act system of records.

According to the [Heritage Foundation](#), there are at least 19 federal agencies – including five cabinet-level agencies – that have created or proposed creating tracking lists for religious-exemption requests for their employees.

The list includes the [Department of Justice](#), the [Department of Health and Human Services](#), the [Department of Transportation](#) and the [Department of the Treasury](#).

Several notices, published in the Federal Register, claim they are being issued to implement Biden’s COVID-19 executive order on federal government employees. The rest have used the [Privacy Act of 1974](#)—which “[establishes](#) a code of information practices that govern the collection, maintenance use and dissemination of information about individuals stored by federal agencies”— as the justification for creating a list.

The agencies plan to collect the following data: name of the individual seeking accommodation, religious affiliation, reason for requesting an accommodation, how long the religious belief has been held, information concerning religious affiliation, the nature of the sincerely held religious belief, practice or observance, the need for accommodation, any appropriate documentation, details of the accommodation requests, how complying with the mandate would burden religious exercise, names, contact information, date of birth, aliases, home address, gender, contact information, pay grade or band, business associates, supervisor information and other identifying information.

The information collected will be shared with other federal agencies. The notices published in the Federal Register do not

explain how long the data will be stored, why it is needed, why it will be shared between agencies and why an employee's information needs to be kept beyond the decision to grant or deny an employee's religious accommodation request.

In a [tweet](#) from Jan. 14, Adam Housley, an award-winning journalist, said he was informed by the Biden administration, through two executive orders, is utilizing the Selective Service System to collect records related to vaccination status and those who request medical and religious exemptions. Housley said data was also being collected on personnel from medical facilities.

This information is not being obtained with consent and will be used to "determine if the individual can gain access to a federal facility, be hired for federal employment, be retained as a federal employee or be issued a security clearance," according to Housley's sources.

2/2 "Info was authorized to be divulged without consent of the individual. Info was going to be used to determine if the individual can gain access to a federal facility, be hired for federal employment, be retained as a federal employee, or be issued a security clearance."

– Adam Housley (@adamhousley) [January 14, 2022](#)

Missouri Attorney General Eric Schmitt, in a [public comment](#) on Dec. 20, 2021, to the Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg, stated his opposition to the "list."

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The letter states:

"On November 18, at the direction of the Biden Administration, four federal agencies simultaneously announced that those who exercise their legal right to seek a [health or religious waiver](#) from a vaccine mandate would be

tracked in federal databases. Rather than given the public ample time to weigh in on the advisability or legality of collecting such personal information, the Department of Transportation's database in particular became effective on the day it was published (citizens were given until December 20th to belatedly comment but this "after the fact" offer makes a mockery of any guise of actually listening to their concerns). The Administration's dystopian-sounding data systems go by such names as the "Employee Accommodations Files," "Reasonable Accommodations Records, OSHRC-9" and the "Personal Health and Religious Information", databases.

"The chilling effect on a citizens' exercise of religion due to the creation of this Database is alarming. First, the federal government decrees that a citizen who seeks a medical exemption or a waiver based on a sincerely held religious belief has automatically consented to being entered in the Database. To put it plainly, invoking the legal right to exercise one's religious faith risks simultaneously waiving that same legal right."

Schmitt said the sheer size and scope of what will be tracked is alarming. "The staggering amount of information being collected on self-identified religious practitioners would be unacceptable even if it were closely held by a particular federal agency," Schmitt wrote.

"In fact, the government is open about the willingness to share this information with "federal, state, local or foreign" jurisdictions, assuming certain (limited) criteria are met," Schmitt added. "No effort is made to explain why sharing information on the religious beliefs or practices of American citizens should be shared with foreign governments but the question is one of several that begs an immediate answer."