

Military Refusers Held the Line Against COVID Vaccine Mandates



The President signed the 2023 National Defense Authorization Act on Friday, which was [sent to his desk](#) with bipartisan support. This is the most profound chance each year that the Congress has to force the political appointees and generals who run the Armed Forces to adjust how they manage the force, changes they would otherwise refuse.

Fortunately for the thousands of Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, and Marines who have stood fast, it appears that the Nation's legislative branch intends to force a course correction of deep moral and ethical significance through the Fiscal Year 2023 NDAA and rescind the ineffective COVID-19 "vaccine" requirement for the men and women of the military.

This moment belongs to my friends and colleagues across the Armed Forces who held the line against demands to be part of a large-scale medical experiment. They are the bravest Americans in the ranks today. These patriots withstood the largest

psychological operations campaign waged in our lifetimes and endured tremendous coercion and manipulation.

They are men and women who possess spines of steel, the ones our fellow citizens can most count on to face an enemy of the nation and not blink. Rather than merely reciting the values of their respective branches of the military, they demonstrated what it looks like to actually live by those values. Many more times their number can only wish to demonstrate that level of courage.

A large percentage of those in the military know that the order to take the COVID-19 mRNA shot, misbranded as a vaccine, is immoral and unlawful. Yet most who had concerns felt trapped, not wanting to lose the benefits promised to us and our families in exchange for a life of service. Many in the ranks expressed concerns not only with the science, but with the tone of how the "vaccine" requirement was implemented.

Their feedback was dismissed by a majority of commanders and military medical officials who followed narrative over science. A sizable percentage of the military's COVID-19 vaccine mandate compliance numbers are a product of duress. Those who are expected to sacrifice on behalf of freedom for others were forced to sacrifice personal conviction in order to continue providing for their families and stop the harassment.

Those who held firm withstood supervisors and colleagues speaking of 'their kind' in the most cruel ways, as if they were inferior forms of humanity who knowingly and deliberately sought the deaths of beloved family members through their non-compliance. They withstood blatant discrimination and insult from supervisors armed with politically driven talking points in lieu of compassion, medical expertise, and truth. Officers with stellar records were removed from leadership positions.

Others selected for such positions based on steadfast service

over many years had their assignments canceled as if charged with criminal conduct. The manner in which they were treated betrays the thin veneer of 'People first' and 'People are our greatest asset' inclusivity talking points frequently heralded from senior defense officials.

Our nation's warriors, the ones who dared question an official narrative about the claimed *safety*, *efficacy* and *morality* of the shot were bullied, taken out of the assignment sequence necessary to be competitive for promotion, and in some cases put in positions to have their performance rated by officials outside of their direct supervisory chain. This continues despite mounting evidence not only of the shot's ineffectiveness at preventing infection and virus transmission, but also the health risks it causes to otherwise healthy people.

Under military regulation and federal law, military members can request exemption from certain duties and vaccination requirements based on religious conviction. The current process puts the power to decide the veracity of one's religious conviction into the hands of military commanders, a power no agent of the state should ever have.

Many service members who applied for religious accommodation have been called liars by commanders who do not share or respect their faith tradition. The Department of Defense Inspector General and federal court rulings charge that the DoD's handling of accommodation requests violates the Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1993. So far, exemptions have been granted almost exclusively to those already in the process of retiring or being discharged.

Under growing scrutiny, the Defense Department recently lifted its restrictions aimed at preventing those who applied for religious accommodation from moving to their next duty station to resume their careers. Those who are now finally allowed to move are more than a full year behind their peers, placing

them at a competitive disadvantage for being selected to key positions necessary for future promotion. This will effectively ensure that those who acted on this matter of conscience do not rise to senior leadership positions in the force.

Missing out on promotions reduces the amount of time one can stay in service and correspondingly reduces their future military pension. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that once at their new units, competency, professionalism and hard work will be recognized by their new superiors, or if the so-called "unvaccinated" will remain marked for allegedly not being team players.

Questions remain about whether the military will continue punishing the "unvaccinated" from the shadows by keeping them marked as non-deployable, restricted from traveling to training events, and blocked from serving in leadership roles. These are but a small sampling of oppressive actions against exercising the sacred right of conscience. Such tactics marginalize troops who dared question the wisdom of putting an experimental and unproven drug into their bloodstreams at the order of groupthink-driven superiors.

If one is not free to decide what he or she can put into his or her own body, then true freedom is relegated to a distant concept rather than a reality of American society. Those who serve in the military fight for the rights of all Americans, including themselves. Commanders would better steward their authority and more faithfully serve those in their charge by recognizing that foundational reality.

This coming change forced through the NDAA is only a first step. Some members of Congress are signaling an interest in requiring the Defense Department to reinstate troops who were separated, or essentially fired, causing the end of careers, retirement and life-long health care benefits over their refusal to submit to this mandate that is now set to be

terminated by law. Such an option for reinstatement must be made available to begin to redress the wrongs suffered by those who have dedicated their lives to serve us.

However, these veterans would not be blamed for declining to re-enter an organization from which they were demonized, harassed and discriminated against in spite of the years of personal and family sacrifice for what was believed to be a moral cause. The most meaningful thing Congress can now do is to unequivocally criminalize the double standard and discriminatory treatment those who exercise their rights to decline this experimental product endure.

Prior to the Department of Defense mandating the COVID shot, many commanders isolated those, who like me, exercised our rights of individual choice in absence of an order. Many commanders created a caste system in which those who took the shot were treated favorably, and those who did not were shamed, isolated, and treated as if leprous oath breakers. These actions fly in the face of equal opportunity policies across every branch of the DoD. If those same commanders treated other populations within the military in such a derogatory manner, their careers would undoubtedly be at risk. Absent congressional action on this issue, discriminatory practices by defense officials will continue against those who exercise their rights to abstain from the shot.

There is a double standard regarding which ways of thinking and living are accepted and protected. The US Constitution, law and military regulations speak clearly against this. Yet top military officials, leading all the way to the Secretary of Defense, are not held accountable. Even now, federal court rulings have restricted multiple military branches from enforcing the mandate, and yet, many units still refuse to halt disciplinary actions against the so-called 'unvaxxed,' despite clear congressional intent to the contrary and an increasing weight of scientific evidence.

The military chain of command feels immune to concerns expressed by service members, qualified medical personnel, the American public, and especially America's elected representatives. That portends dangerous consequences for the civil-military relationship. Congress must firmly assert itself in the management of the military, one that is increasingly accustomed to operating with impunity as an authority unto itself.

Samuel Adams wrote in 1776 that standing armies constitute a danger to liberty and a power that "should be watched with a jealous eye." Our ancestors who founded this nation feared the idea of maintaining a large armed force of independent mind and a preference toward self-regulation, and that such things are a threat to the liberty held so precious then, as it is today. The actions taken by the Defense Department since 2020 remind us why. Lawmakers must exercise supervisory responsibility to ensure that the military abides by the law, respects America's service members and never again uses them as medical test subjects.

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