

Republicans Threaten to Block Military Spending Bill Over COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate



Nearly 20 Senate Republicans are [threatening to block](#) the annual defense authorization bill (NDAA) unless Congress agrees to end its COVID vaccination mandate for military members and reinstate troops dismissed under the policy.

The NDAA sets the spending policies and priorities for the military each year and has been passed annually for over 50 years.

“The vaccination mandate has forced our nation’s young patriotic men and women to choose between their faith, their medical autonomy, and their careers,” said Sen. Rand Paul (R-Ky.) said Wednesday at a press conference. “At a time when the military is struggling to meet targets for recruitment, the administration is firing soldiers we invested in and trained.”

Sen. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) argued that military recruitment had taken a hit due to the Aug. 2021 COVID-19 vaccination

requirement implemented by Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin.

“The problem here is that we’re having a dilemma we haven’t had in decades – and that’s finding enough people serving,” Graham said. “Our recruiting goals are way short. The conflict in the world is getting worse, not better. We need more people in the military, not less.”

Sen. Ted Cruz (R-TX) believes the Biden administration was using the vaccination policy to purge conservatives from the military and Sen. Ron Johnson (R-WI) questioned the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines.

“The bottom line here is the vaccine does not prevent infection. It does not prevent transmission,” [Johnson said](#). “So why would we make anybody take it? It is insane.”

The military struggled to meet its recruiting goals in 2022. Military members who do not get vaccinated risk dismissal, although courts intervened when it was clear the military was rejecting religious exemptions without cause. All new troops must still be fully vaccinated to join.

According to the [latest data](#) released by the Dept. of Defense (DOD), about 3,300 Marines, 1,800 soldiers, 1,800 sailors, and 900 airmen have been kicked out of the military for refusing to get a vaccine.

The DOD claims that military members already receive a host of other vaccines, and COVID-19 vaccines are no different. They say the issue concerns “military readiness” even though most people have natural immunity – and the shots have been shown to cause injury and are ineffective.

Paul said on Wednesday that Senate leadership has yet to sign up to support the effort.

“To my knowledge, no one in leadership has signed up to support the effort yet. And I’d ask, from my perspective, that they let us know if they’re for or against this,” Paul said.