

Administration of Joseph R. Biden, Jr., 2022

Statement on the United States Supreme Court's Decision on Federal COVID–19 Vaccine Requirements

January 13, 2022

My administration began to institute vaccination requirements last July, when after months of making vaccinations free and widely available, 90 million Americans were still unvaccinated. Today, that number is down to under 35 million. These vaccine requirements applied to members of the Armed Forces, Federal workers and contractors, health care workers, and employees in large firms. Had my administration not put vaccination requirements in place, we would be now experiencing a higher death toll from COVID–19 and even more hospitalizations.

Today's decision by the Supreme Court to uphold the requirement for health care workers will save lives: the lives of patients who seek care in medical facilities, as well as the lives of doctors, nurses, and others who work there. It will cover 10.4 million health care workers at 76,000 medical facilities. We will enforce it.

At the same time, I am disappointed that the Supreme Court has chosen to block commonsense, lifesaving requirements for employees at large businesses that were grounded squarely in both science and the law. This emergency standard allowed employers to require vaccinations or to permit workers to refuse to be vaccinated, so long as they were tested once a week and wore a mask at work: a very modest burden.

As a result of the Court's decision, it is now up to States and individual employers to determine whether to make their workplaces as safe as possible for employees and whether their businesses will be safe for consumers during this pandemic by requiring employees to take the simple and effective step of getting vaccinated. The Court has ruled that my administration cannot use the authority granted to it by Congress to require this measure, but that does not stop me from using my voice as President to advocate for employers to do the right thing to protect Americans' health and economy. I call on business leaders to immediately join those who have already stepped up—including one-third of Fortune 100 companies—and institute vaccination requirements to protect their workers, customers, and communities.

We have to keep working together if we want to save lives, keep people working, and put this pandemic behind us.

Categories: Statements by the President : Supreme Court decision on Federal COVID–19 vaccine requirements.

Subjects: Business and industry : Corporate responsibility; Business and industry : COVID–19 vaccination requirement for businesses with 100 employees or more; Diseases : Coronavirus, domestic prevention efforts; Health and Human Services, Department of : Health care workers, COVID–19 vaccination requirement; Judiciary : Judicial review.

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