

## United States Senate

October 27, 2021

The Honorable Debbie Stabenow  
Chairwoman  
Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairwoman Stabenow,

I write today to request a hearing in the Senate Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry Committee on President Biden's Executive Order on Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors, as well as the forthcoming Emergency Temporary Standard (ETS) from the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA). The impact of these mandates on our workforce, economic recovery, and the broader supply chain will have wide-reaching implications and they should be discussed and debated in Congress before being allowed to advance. Furthermore, I would like to suggest a broad labor panel consisting of rank-and-file union members that are important to the agricultural supply chain so that the full and diverse impacts of these mandates can be best understood. Their voices must be heard regarding the impact the mandate will have not only on individual freedoms, but also on our nation's food security.

Since the Executive Orders were issued, I have held a series of town halls and roundtable meetings on vaccine mandates to inform my efforts in Washington. Last week, I held a roundtable featuring multiple labor associations representing electrical workers, law enforcement, bakers, machinists, and more, as well as a roundtable with business leaders. These labor associations contract with some of the largest employers across the state. Additionally, I have heard from professors, graduate student researchers, and school administrators from our research universities in Kansas that they will lose hundreds of years of combined research and institutional knowledge as people walk rather than get the vaccine. I have also listened to the concerns from volunteer county committee members for the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resource Conservation Services who are ready to tender resignation in lieu of a vaccine which will have a dramatic negative impact on the ability to service farmers' and ranchers' needs. Based on input from these Kansans, I can say with certainty that if these mandates go into effect, it will have dire consequences on our workforce, economic recovery, and trust in the federal government.

Following President Biden's September 9 announcement of multiple new vaccination mandates, many Kansas businesses have told me that their employees will walk off the job over this new requirement. This concern is felt nationwide for employers. A poll reported that 70 percent of unvaccinated workers would likely quit if their employer required them to be vaccinated and didn't provide a medical or religious exemption.<sup>1</sup> With the already existing supply chain challenges, an additional shortage of employees would only exacerbate problems and increase food costs even further for American families.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/post-abc-poll-coronavirus/2021/09/04/94add942-0cde-11ec-aea1-42a8138f132a\\_story.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/post-abc-poll-coronavirus/2021/09/04/94add942-0cde-11ec-aea1-42a8138f132a_story.html).

President Biden's September 9 Executive Order, and the subsequent guidance from the Safer Federal Workforce Task Force, requires all parties that contract or subcontract with the federal government be vaccinated against COVID-19. The forthcoming ETS from OSHA similarly has not gone through the traditional notice and comment period due to the nature of the ETS rulemaking process. From my understanding, the millions of contractors, subcontractors, and their employees have had little to no ability to comment on these rules, nor have they been able to have their most basic questions regarding this mandate answered by the Administration. Therefore, I urgently request the Committee hold a public hearing so that Congress can hear the full impact of these mandates. Kansas labor union rank-and-file members have specifically expressed interest in an opportunity to share their thoughts and concerns with Members of this Committee.

Thank you for your leadership in committee and I know there a number of pressing issues in agriculture. I hope you will give Kansan workers and labor unions a public platform to share their concerns, and for the Committee to take swift action. I look forward to your timely response to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. W. Marshall". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and "W".

Roger Marshall, M.D.  
U.S. Senator

cc: The Honorable John Boozman