

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

August 3, 2021

Rear Admiral Dr. Brian P. Monahan
Attending Physician
U.S. Congress
H-166, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Dr. Monahan,

We are extremely grateful for the expert guidance that you have provided to our institution throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. Despite immense pushback and frustration from internal and external forces, we appreciate that your office has been working tirelessly to follow the science and keep all Members and Capitol Hill staff as safe as possible. We write to you today to express our belief that the U.S. Congress should be considering a vaccine requirement for Members and staff of the U.S. Capitol complex or, at minimum, twice per week testing for those who are unable to verify positive vaccination status.

In addition to being Members of Congress who walk these halls and rely on your guidance to keep our workplace safe, we are also the managers of teams of dedicated staff members, some of whom are immunocompromised or have other health issues that leave them extraordinarily vulnerable to COVID-19. We feel the utmost responsibility to prioritize the safety of our staff, just as any employer should feel towards those who report to them. The necessity of ensuring vaccination of Members and staff of the U.S. Capitol complex is evident: The science overwhelmingly supports the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines, and the pandemic has already cost lives of over 610,000 Americans, including several Members of this august body. Additionally, unique factors put U.S. Capitol complex staff at an elevated risk of COVID-19, including a high level of domestic and international travel by those who work here and our workspace being one that frequently has visitors from all corners of the country. Many other government agencies, businesses, universities, and hospitals are beginning to implement vaccine requirements. The science is clear that vaccinations can save lives and help guide our country out of this terrible pandemic.

We know that your recommendations regarding the health and safety of the U.S. Capitol are free from partisan calculations and grounded in science, which is why we ask you to follow the science and require vaccination. The unfortunate politicization of COVID-19 and our life-saving vaccines has already caused our nation immeasurable loss and incalculable pain. To forego the common-sense decision to require vaccination or frequent testing in the halls of Congress due to partisan pressure would call into question the objectivity of how we make health and safety decisions for this institution—and risk Members bringing a deadly virus back to their district. Furthermore, a vaccine requirement issued by the nonpartisan Office of the Attending Physician may even contribute to the depoliticization of the COVID-19 vaccine on Capitol Hill and back home.

It goes without saying that exemptions should be granted to individuals who have religious beliefs or health conditions that prevent them from receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. In these cases, or cases in which individuals are unable to, or choose not to, share proof of vaccination, we believe it is reasonable to institute regular testing requirements of at least twice per week. To prevent the spread of COVID-19, Capitol Hill must do everything possible to lead by example and ensure the safety of our own workforce.

We look forward to continuing the conversation about ways that we can promote safety on Capitol Hill and appreciate your serious consideration of a vaccine requirement for Members and staff of the U.S. Capitol complex. If there is anything we can do to help support these efforts, do not hesitate to let us know.

Sincerely,



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

Sean Casten
Member of Congress

Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress

Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Bill Foster
Member of Congress

Dwight Evans
Member of Congress

Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress

Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress

Al Green
Member of Congress

Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress

Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress