



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on August 5, 2021

Report: Biden Administration to Require COVID-19 Vaccination for Foreigners Visiting U.S.

The Biden administration is developing a plan to require nearly all foreigners wanting to legally visit the United States to be fully vaccinated against COVID-19, as a prerequisite to lifting existing travel restrictions imposed at the pandemic's outset.

According to a [Reuters report](#) that cites an administration official familiar with the matter, the government has set up interagency working groups "to have a new system ready for when we can reopen travel." The report noted there will be "a phased approach that over time will mean, with limited exceptions, that foreign nationals traveling to the United States (from all countries) need to be fully vaccinated."



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Under [existing rules](#), anyone, with the exception of U.S. citizens, legal permanent residents, and their immediate family members, who has been in Brazil, China, India, South Africa, the European Union's Schengen Area, Ireland, or the U.K. within two weeks of traveling to the United States is barred from entry. Arriving air travelers need to show proof of a negative COVID-19 test no more than three days old, regardless of vaccination status.

Currently, the only foreign travelers legally allowed to cross by land into the United States from Mexico and Canada are essential workers such as truck drivers or nurses, and they are currently not required to verify their vaccination status. It is unclear whether the new policy would change that. The multitudes of illegal migrants that pour into the United States across the southern border, whose vaccinated status is not checked, were naturally not mentioned in the report. So far in 2021, U.S. Customs and Border Patrol has apprehended over 1.1 million illegal "migrants." As the detention facilities on the border get overwhelmed, migrants are released to Non-Governmental Organizations, accommodated in hotels, and transported to the interior of the country.

Recent reports show that many illegal aliens have tested positive for COVID-19, and thousands have been released without being given court dates. Facing the mounting criticism, the Biden administration has [reportedly](#) decided to offer those "arriving" without documents a Johnson & Johnson COVID-19 vaccine "whose single-dose regimen is better suited to a transient population that may not be able to coordinate a second shot," as one Department of Homeland Security official put it. It is hard to predict if the measure succeeds at containing the infections, since the COVID-19 vaccines have been already [distributed](#) in Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) facilities, where one-third of all detainees refused the shot. The Trump administration implemented Title 42 public-health protections at the start of the pandemic, which turned back migrants in order to prevent the spread of COVID-19. The Biden



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administration deemed that policy “inhumane,” and welcomed unaccompanied children and some family units into the United States without bothering to check on their health.

The Reuters report does not specify any timeline for the policy implementation, but it is said that since the global infection rate remains high and “continues to increase,” the current restriction will remain in place for the time being — a notion that yet again raises questions about the vaccines’ efficacy. Airline industry officials told Reuters they don’t expect any changes within “at least weeks and potentially months.”

Until taking office, President Biden was a fierce opponent of any travel restrictions, which he criticized as unproductive in containing the spread of COVID-19. Regarding President Trump’s travel ban on China imposed last February, then-candidate Biden [tweeted](#): “We are in the midst of a crisis with the coronavirus. We need to lead the way with science — not Donald Trump’s record of hysteria, xenophobia and fear-mongering. He is the worst possible person to lead our country through a global health emergency.”

As Trump pursued more travel bans to curb the spread of the coronavirus, including shutting down U.S.-European travel in March of 2020, Biden continued to condemn the measures as ineffective. “Banning all travel from Europe — or any other part of the world — will not stop it,” Biden [wrote](#). “A wall will not stop the coronavirus.... This disease could impact every nation and any person on the planet — and we need a plan to combat it.” The plan Biden had in mind, it could be assumed, did not include restricting travel from the COVID-19 hot spots. Trump’s travel restrictions also sparked [severe backlash](#) from the liberal media. The restrictions were arguably “emotional,” and “not effective,” and the media put the blame on “conservative lawmakers and far-right supporters of the president.” The WHO’s [recommendations](#) against travel restrictions were quoted often. Dr. Anthony Fauci himself [spoke](#) against the travel restrictions from China, only to [praise](#) them later.

As the infection rate rose abroad and the cases started to appear in the United States, Americans were overwhelmingly supportive of the protective travel bans on the affected countries. A Pew Research Center [survey](#) showed that 95 percent of Americans agreed that “restricting international travel to the U.S.” was the most necessary step in stopping the spread of the coronavirus. This is when then-candidate Biden found he was on the wrong footing on the issue, and switched his position, pivoting to support travel bans.

While neither the previous nor current administration set any metrics for adding or dropping countries from the list, Trump did attempt to lift European countries from the restrictions in January 2021, but Biden [reinstated](#) the restrictions before they were dropped. The travel ban on Brazil was also reinstated in the same proclamation, and South Africa was added to the list. In May, [India](#) also made it to the list.



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