



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on July 30, 2021

## Biden to Federal Employees: Get Vaccinated or Submit to Strict COVID Protocols

Speaking at the CNN Town Hall on July 21, President Biden claimed, “This is not a pandemic,” when answering the question if he still feels that “the virus is on retreat.” “You’re not gonna get COVID if you have these vaccinations,” he assured the Americans, and called on people to vaccinate.

Eight days later, despite all of those comforting claims, Biden [announced](#) on Thursday sweeping new pandemic requirements, including a mandate for millions of federal workers to receive a “lifesaving vaccine” or follow stringent “safety” protocols (the transcript of the remarks may be found [here](#)).



AP Images

Over and over, the president repeated that “99 percent” of those falling ill and dying are unvaccinated, who put others at risk and endanger the nation’s fragile economic recovery and return to normalcy.

“It’s an American blessing that we have vaccines for each and every American. It’s such a shame to squander that blessing,” said Biden, as the FDA [extended](#) shelf life of the unused Johnson & Johnson vaccines for another six months, pushing it out for the second time as states [drowning](#) in jabs struggle to get rid of them — not just J&J ones.

Biden also praised the recent increase in Republican lawmakers, such as Senate Minority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.), urging those not vaccinated to get their shots. “This is not about red states and blue states,” Biden said. “It’s literally about life and death, life and death.” It’s been [reported](#) that McConnell is set to start running 60-second ads on 100 radio stations in Kentucky state to educate people on the vaccine and urge them to get the shot(s).

After announcing the new incentives to convince unvaccinated Americans to get a jab, such as reimbursing the small- and medium-sized businesses for letting their employees to get a paid time off for getting a vaccine themselves or taking their children or other family members to get inoculated, and also calling on states to give all newly vaccinated folks \$100, Biden moved to the “less pleasant” part of his speech.

He first praised the decision of the Department of the [Veterans Affairs](#) to mandate its healthcare personnel to get vaccinated. “Next,” said Biden in a somber voice, “Since many vaccinations are required for the active-duty military today, I’m asking the Defense Department to look into how and when they will add COVID-19 to the list of vaccinations that the armed forces MUST get.” Biden said this is especially important since the military personnel often serve abroad, in places where vaccination rates are low, and the disease is rampant. By law, the U.S. military can’t mandate a vaccine that hasn’t been fully approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). The final say, however, is [reportedly](#)



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expected as soon as September.

The president continued:

Every government employee will be asked to attest to their vaccination status. Anyone who does not attest or is not vaccinated, will be required to mask no matter where they are, test one or two times a week to see if they acquired COVID, socially distance, and generally will not be allowed to travel for work.

Biden went on to ask his administration to apply similar standards to all federal contractors:

If you want to do business with the federal government, get your workers vaccinated.

Biden added that the Chamber of Commerce, representing tens of thousands of American businesses; the National Association of Manufacturers; and the Business Roundtable all “applauded” the actions of the administration, so he urged them to follow suit.

Biden finished his speech underlining that the Department of Justice (DOJ) “has made it clear” that the COVID-19 vaccination mandates are “legal,” referring to the [opinion](#) that the Justice Department’s Office of Legal Counsel published on July 26, saying that federal law concerning the FDA’s emergency use authorizations (EUA) on COVID-19 vaccines made by Moderna, Pfizer, and J&J doesn’t “prohibit public or private entities from imposing vaccine requirements, even when the only vaccines available are those authorized under EUAs.”

“Fully vaccinated workplaces,” Biden stated, would allow America to get back to “normal life” “more quickly and more effectively.” But while America is getting back to normal and the COVID rate remains high, the “science tells,” per Biden, both vaccinated and unvaccinated people should wear facemasks. The White House has [reimposed](#) the mask mandate on Tuesday, following a yet-again updated [guidance](#) from the CDC.

The federal government, as the nation’s largest employer, directly employs nearly [three million](#) people, in addition to almost [1.4 million](#) armed forces personnel, but the new policy could affect many more, when roughly [4.1 million](#) federal contractors, [1.2 million](#) federal grant employees, and 0.5 million postal workers are factored in. From Biden’s speech, it could be assumed the vaccine requirements would apply to all of them.

According to a *Politico* [report](#) titled “Biden’s talk of the vaccine mandates sends labor into disarray,” many labor leaders consider the move premature, complaining that it would prompt requests for exemptions and fearing it would only further alienate a part of their membership that was already unlikely to get vaccinated.

Even prior to Biden’s announcement, some national unions were speaking out against it, [according](#) to WESH 2.

United Auto Workers, which represents 397,000 members, indicated the union encourages workers to get vaccinated but is against having vaccine requirements because some people have religious or health concerns.

Larry Cosme, president of the Federal Law Enforcement Officers Association, which represents 30,000 federal officers and agents, said in a statement that while the organization supports the vaccine it



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opposes compelling it. “Forcing people to undertake a medical procedure is not the American way and is a clear civil rights violation no matter how proponents may seek to justify it,” he said.

State lawmakers across the U.S. have introduced more than 100 bills aiming to prohibit employers from requiring vaccination as a condition of employment, [according](#) to the National Academy for State Health Policy. At least six states — Arizona, Florida, Idaho, Montana, Texas, and South Dakota — have approved such bills. On Tuesday, New Hampshire Governor Chris Sununu [signed](#) a bill into law saying residents can’t be required to be vaccinated against COVID-19 in order to access public facilities, benefits, or services.



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