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How Should Kansas Respond to Unconstitutional Federal Mandates

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To my friends and neighbors of the 77th District,

Coercing Americans to relinquish their First Amendment Rights is a dangerous proposition – for any reason. Even well-intended reasons.

President Biden’s Executive Order (and anticipated order) requiring a vaccine mandate for federal employers, contractors, and private employers of over 100 employees is ethically, morally, and constitutionally deplete of governmental restraint, scientific validation, and legal wisdom – especially when it excludes religious and medical exemptions.

As an American, a Kansan, and as your State Representative -- I oppose government mandates that brazenly violate your ability to freely exercise your religious faith – period. The current vaccine mandate finds thousands of Americans conscientiously objecting to the coerced requirements and looking to their state leaders for protection. I am ready to stand with freedom.

Historically, federal statutes have long since protected health care providers who refuse to participate in services based on moral objections or religious beliefs. Federal statute lists that you cannot be “coerced into performing procedures that are against your religious or moral beliefs,” yet President Biden has refused to acknowledge a minority number of Americans who have made a conscientious objection to taking the covid vaccine based on moral, personal, medical, or religious grounds. This is simply unacceptable and un-American.

In George Washington’s farewell address printed in 1796, Washington reminds Americans that the Constitution “is sacredly obligatory” upon us all. He also warns that “in the course of time and things” there will be those who will be able to subvert the power of the people. As I consider these words, my attention is drawn to our present-day situation in which an over-reaching, unconstitutional executive order dividing Americans into two classes is issued to supersede congressional action that requires compromise,

State action that exacts legislation on a local and direct level and is prescribed in the 10th amendment, and our individual Constitutional rights that are left to individuals and families to defend. This presidential action, unlike many others, willfully subverts the power from the people in a way that strips the livelihoods of thousands of Americans without course for reasonable appeal.

In defending constitutional first amendment rights, I am not debating or undermining the efficacy of the vaccine or the financial and political implications surrounding the vaccine. My primary concern falls swiftly on the mandate for the vaccine itself. And with this mandate, the unconstitutional implications it has on all of us – if not today, someday in the future.

My concern wraps around the many Kansans who are being forced to choose between having a job that pays their bills and their personal convictions which inform and guide their everyday lives. With my constituents in mind, with freedom in mind, I am in favor of passing State Legislation that at minimum provides a pathway for religious and medical exemptions for Kansans facing the vaccine mandate. In addition, I am in favor of legislation that provides unemployment benefits for those individuals who were denied their medical or religious exemptions. I am in favor of commonsense legislation that could be upheld in a court of law and protect Kansans from federal overreach.

Kansas Leadership in the House and Senate are working together, with a special committee, to provide a course of action for Kansans. Leadership from the Kansas House led by Ron Ryckman provided House members encouragement by issuing the following statement: *“Let us be clear, we oppose the proposed mandates. A special session may be needed at some time to carry out a well thought out, constitutionally proper, and legally effective strategy to fight back against them. The steps that are being taken right now are designed to determine that strategy and ensure that when we act, we do so in a way that does not waste taxpayer dollars or put Kansans at risk of violating state law or federal law in a no-win dilemma.”*

I’m confident that the Special Committee will set forth an actionable response that will protect Kansans from federal overreach to the very best of our abilities. I believe if we stand together and stay focused on what can be accomplished -- we can make a difference for the benefit of all Kansans.

Stay in touch and God bless!

Rep. Kristey Williams
77th District

