

July 13, 2021

Dear Idaho Legislators:

It is with great concern that the employers of Idaho would be subjected to a convening of the legislature to expand regulations on how we can and do operate our enterprises. At issue is the long, common, and necessary practice of requiring vaccines for the safe operation of commerce.

Our customers and clients depend on our products and services around the globe. Idaho is a worldwide leader in production as proven by the current economy. That has been driven by the fact that Idaho is the least regulated state with a low-tax approach that allows our businesses to succeed.

Part of that success hinges on various requirements we may choose to place on employees as a condition of employment on our premises or on our behalf. That may include things like mandatory drug testing submission, uniforms, medical clearances, masks, ventilators of all types, and, yes, even vaccinations.

As a result of such requirements being a condition of employment, employers have always determined that a requirement to obtain a COVID-19 vaccine would be covered under the existing worker's compensation system if in the extremely unlikely event harm were to occur.

This is hardly a new requirement, and not one that is limited to private enterprise. The military requires vaccinations, education institutions require vaccinations of both students and teachers, and religious missions require vaccinations to leave their home country—including the COVID-19 vaccination.

Operation Warp Speed was initiated by President Donald Trump on May 15, 2020, in an effort to rapidly and safely develop a vaccination for the COVID-19 disease. This wise response put the might of American scientific prowess to work developing, testing, and producing a widely available vaccine to get the world back on its feet. That effort was even more successful than was anticipated. After tens of thousands of tests and ongoing research, a safe vaccine with up to a 95% efficacy was made available to Americans starting last January. It has saved thousands of lives.

The reality is that an employer should not be forced to keep an employee who does not adhere to the standards and requirements of the enterprise. As an example, an engineering company needs to send an engineer to another country to perform their work will usually require multiple vaccines specific to the country or region. If the engineer refuses, then the employee is no longer of value to the company. Why should the employer be required to keep them on the payroll? The examples are numerous. The rights of employees to find work elsewhere are not being violated in any way.

Unfortunately, erroneous information continues to be pushed by those who would seek political gain at the expense of saving lives. They would even go so far as to create new government regulation on businesses to suit their personal ambitions. IACI members voted unanimously to

vehemently oppose Lieutenant Governor McGeachin's demand that the Idaho Legislature return in special session to hear new regulation on Idaho business.

We support the position of Speaker Scott Bedke who stated, "There's been over 300 million dollars given with minimal problems, and couple that with the fact that Idaho is all about reducing regulations and staying out of the relationship between employer and employees. A tightly held tenet of the Republican Party is to stay out of the employer-employee relationship." His words reflect smart leadership and a true conservative approach. We strongly recommend Idaho continue to stay the course and allow employers to make decisions that are in the best interests of their operations. Those who choose to move on from their employers are free to do so. That is the Idaho way.

Thank you.

Alex LaBeau
President
IACI