

My name is Gabe Gietzen and I wish to voice my support of House Bill 1391.

I am writing this based on my experience in the ND Army National Guard where I served for 28 years. I reached the rank of Command Sergeant Major/E-9 at the Battalion level and was in the pipeline for the next echelon level assignment.

However, I made the difficult decision to retire in February of 2022 with the primary factor being the DoD COVID Vaccine mandate issued in September 2021 under then President Biden.

I was in a command position and in good conscious could not support this mandate on healthy, low-risk individuals. I did try to inform as many Soldiers as I could regarding the Religious Exemption policy, but I know many who were eligible chose to retire instead. This mandate had a detrimental impact to recruiting and retention immediately following.

I realize this was a DoD matter and not a state issue but the concept of pushing a product onto a low-risk population with no liability for the manufacturer is an affront to liberty. As current events show, President Trump has signed an executive order to re-instate servicemembers who were kicked out because of this controversial vaccine mandate.

While I'm not anti-traditional vax having taken many in my military service, I am against the extreme use of coercion by various taxpayer funded government entities to force a choice between a job and vaccine or procedure. There needs to be a limit on overreach and use of "emergency powers" to push such controversial products onto the population. Time and data have shown that being skeptical of the COVID vax and standing for liberty was instinctively the right call.

Please support the passing of HB 1391 as it gives us protection against overreach but does not limit our right choose to get a vaccine or procedure if we want to.

Respectfully,

Gabe Gietzen

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