

I have lived in this county for over 30 years, I am a mother and a teacher, and I am opposed to the vaccine passport. For the past two years, the residents of Montgomery County have done everything you have asked. We have stayed home, worn masks, kept our kids out of school and sports, and above all, overwhelmingly have gotten vaccinated. In fact, according to CDC data, 90% of our population ages 5 and up are fully vaccinated, including myself. However, this passport goes too far. It is moving the goalpost on a constituency who has been by and large compliant. And it won't even make a difference. It takes 5 weeks to get someone fully vaccinated, and by the time the passport takes effect, this spike will naturally be over. Furthermore, Pfizers own CEO recently admitted that the current vaccine is ineffective against the Omicron variant. So in 5 weeks, you could have an additional 5% of the population vaccinated against a strain that largely no longer exists. How will this help the situation? Covid has spread rapidly in December and January, and is predicted to fall rapidly. It is already falling. Between the natural immunity resulting from the recent cases and the highly vaccinated population, there is no need for a passport. We are all going to have increased immunity for at least three months. I say that based on the CDC guidance that states individuals who have had covid do not need to quarantine if re-exposed within 3 months. From a health standpoint, this passport will make little difference.

Additionally, a passport will not motivate unvaccinated adults to get vaccinated. If they weren't convinced by the federal mandate and their jobs, they are not going to be convinced by this. Unvaccinated adults are bound to be emboldened by the Supreme Court ruling on Thursday, and will therefore remain unvaccinated.

Another drawback would be the passport has the potential to hurt small businesses. Businesses everywhere are understaffed, and you are now burdening them with being the vaccination police. As a vaccinated individual, I do not want to prove it everywhere I go. I believe it is government overreach. It should be left up to the business. As a result, I will go out of my way to avoid anywhere enforcing this passport. This won't be difficult given our proximity to several other counties, none of which have such a requirement with the exception of DC. And their passport doesn't include children under the age of 12.

Which brings me to my final point and my greatest concern. This passport would apply to children ages 5+. Children have suffered greatly the past two years. As a parent and a teacher, I can attest to the fact that while our children have never been at substantial risk, they have bore substantial harm. We have asked them to isolate, learn from home, and forgo social interaction and sports. Playdates are a thing of the past. Even in young children, anxiety and depression have increased. And we have asked them to do all of this when they were at no greater risk than they were from the flu. They are just now starting to recover. And you want them to give up extracurriculars like dance, swimming and other athletics if they don't get vaccinated.

This vaccine is not fully approved for children. It is authorized currently under Emergency Use. And the emergency use authorization has only been out for two months. Given the documented low risk to children, it makes sense that not all parents are ready to vaccinate their kids yet. We don't know the long term risks, and there are a lot of unknowns. This doesn't make parents

anti-vax, and they shouldn't be forced to choose between their kids' overall well-being and this vaccine. The vaccine's main benefit isn't reduced transmission. It is keeping people out of the hospital, and children already are not at risk for hospitalization. The CDC director recently confirmed this saying that most children are not hospitalized FOR covid. The New York Times has stated that the risk to an unvaccinated child is less than the risk to a vaccinated adult. Yet you want to require vaccination in order for them to continue participating in things like dance classes or indoor swimming lessons. You take these things away, and you are causing physical and mental harm. They have been safely participating in these activities for the past year. Businesses have figured out how to have these activities without substantial risk. Dance, swim, and athletics are important developmental activities in formative years. Based on the current strain and its mild effect on children, as well as the lack of efficacy of the vaccine on this latest strain, we should be looking at the big picture regarding childrens' physical, emotional and developmental needs. Please, do not put parents in this lose-lose position, and do not inflict further harm on children by keeping them from participating in activities that they love. Vote no to the vaccine passport.

