

Jan 24, 2022

Dear Members of the Montgomery County Council:

I heard just today that the Montgomery County Council will be considering a proposal from County Executive Marc Elrich to impose a vaccine requirement “to Enter Bars, Restaurants, Fitness Centers, and Other Covered Establishments.” I strongly oppose this authoritarian and ineffectual measure, and I hope that the Council will do likewise.

Reading the other Testimony submitted to the Council in advance of the Public Hearing on this proposal, I see that everything I can think to say has already been said, and quite eloquently. Some Testimony has presented data to show that vaccine mandates in other major cities in the United States have not been effective at preventing the spread (indeed, the explosion) of COVID cases. Some Testimony has provided quotes from respected figures in the public health establishment (such as the CDC Director, and Dr. Fauci) indicating that vaccination will not reduce the spread of the Omicron variant – it “will ultimately find just about everybody.” Some Testimony has pointed out that the proposal will put an unreasonable burden on businesses which will need to check vaccine passports to allow access. Some Testimony has pointed out that preventing unvaccinated people (who have perhaps already caught and recovered from COVID, thereby acquiring natural immunity) from going to the gym is actually contrary to public health. Some Testimony has pointed out that this kind of regulation causes unvaccinated people to become second-class citizens, forcibly removing them from public life, and is only one step removed from racist treatment of Blacks before the Civil Rights era, and one step removed from the treatment of Jews before the Holocaust.

If the Council cannot be swayed by data, by appeals to trusted authorities, by pointing out expected negative side effects of the proposal, and by pointing to the dangerous and frightening – and un-American – nature of the proposal, then I do not know what other reasonable methods can be employed to sway the Council.

Perhaps I will add this. I have already been double-vaccinated, so this proposal does not directly affect me. Nonetheless, seeing this proposal makes me want to move out of Montgomery County. Montgomery County prides itself as being a great place to live. Even the proposal of this Regulation has made Montgomery County a worse place to live. Passing the Regulation would be significantly worse.

I strongly encourage the Council to read the Testimony that has been submitted, in full.

Sincerely,

Andrew Schwarzkopf