

Dear Honourable Members of the Montgomery County Council,

My name is Brent Jamsa and while I am currently residing in Québec, I have been and still consider myself to be born and raised in Montgomery County and still have family in the county. First, I want to thank you, as well as Montgomery County's public health officials, for all for your leadership during the COVID-19 Pandemic in keeping our residents safe. As someone whose elderly grandmother lives in Germantown, it has been refreshing to have those who are guided by science and goodwill leading our County during this crisis and protecting our most vulnerable residents.

Today, I write to you in support of adopting a vaccine passport in Montgomery County for non-essential activities and businesses. In doing so, I hope to share with you my experience as someone who has used a vaccine passport since September 2021 here in Québec in hopes that it will ease your concerns and the concerns of the community regarding this relatively simple way to ensure we limit the spread of COVID-19.

To provide context, Québec, like all provinces in Canada, currently require proof of vaccination to access non-essential activities and commerce. Recently, Québec began to require proof of vaccination to access liquor and cannabis stores, as well as big box stores. Quebecers currently have three ways to prove their vaccination status: on the VaxiCode App, on paper, or on a mobile device outside the application. Additionally, those over 16 years of age must provide a piece of identification to verify that they are using their own passport. Businesses can then verify that the proof is valid using a VaxiCode Verification App, which ensures the proof is not fraudulent.

In my own experience, getting my vaccination proof through the VaxiCode App was painless and took less than a minute as I was able to furnish my information and the application was able to pull my records from Québec's vaccination registry. I imagine that if a similar procedure was used in Montgomery County, most residents would not have an issue accessing their proof this way.

I urge the County Council to ensure there are a variety of ways to access this proof, including both electronic and non-electronic means. In terms of something like the VaxiCode App, Montgomery County has the potential to be a leader not just in Maryland, but in the entire country in pioneering a similar concept. I urge you to investigate adopting a similar system. As I have always found this process to be easy and fast, and in Québec, it seems that businesses have had no problem working within this framework.

A final consideration I ask that you consider in those who are not residents of Montgomery County but are vaccinated and wish to access places where the vaccine passport is required. I ask that clear guidelines be communicated to the public and to businesses on accepting proof of vaccination that does not originate from the County. This request is somewhat self-serving, as I want to ensure my Québec vaccine passport can allow me to dine at the restaurants I have been dreaming about eating at since I left (Founding Famers' and Taco Bar in RIO, to be exact).

Thank you for your time and consideration. Je vous prie d'agréer, mesdames et messieurs, l'expression de ma considération respectueuse.