Dear Councilmembers,

It came to my notice that a vaccine passport policy was proposed in Montgomery County. I would like to first state that I am fully vaccinated. However, I have my concerns to share with you:

First of all, the vaccination rate in Montgomery County is almost 90%, so that the vaccine passport does not make much difference in preventing infection;

Second, it is well known that the current covid-19 vaccines do not prevent infection, so that the vaccinated and unvaccinated have equal chance to get infected by the virus and have equal chance to spread the virus to others;

Third, we all know the current vaccines available in the US carry some serious side effects. For example, the JnJ vaccine was suspended by FDA on safety concern for a while, and serious side effects like myocardium, etc. were also reported to the mRNA vaccines;

Fourth, the disease caused by the Omicron variant is usually mild, so that it naturally brings a question on whether the benefit of taking a vaccine out-weights the risk of being infected by the Omicron variant. Note that before the pandemic, the mRNA vaccine technology was only used to cancer patients in clinical trials. At that time, it was not intended to apply to mild disease in large healthy population.

Thus, even though the purpose of proposing vaccine passport is to encourage more vaccination, we should respect the right of the people, and the right of parents to their children, to decide whether they should take the vaccine or not, based on their consideration of benefit vs risk on themselves. It is not right to take away people’s right of choice, and it is not right to create discrimination against the un-vaccinated people.

Because of this, I urge you to vote "No" to the proposed vaccine passport policy. Please note that Novavax, a biotech company located in Montgomery County, has submitted their vaccine application to FDA. Their technology has been used for decades in vaccines of different diseases and proven safe. I believe you will see more vaccinations once Novavax vaccine receives a FDA EUA.

Best regards,

Zhao Ouyang