

January 21, 2022

Dear Council Member,

I am adamantly opposed to a vaccine passport. As a fully vaccinated, boosted resident, I feel it has so far been my choice to get vaccinated, and I proudly did so. But I did this based on my choice to do so. I felt that the vaccine would protect me as much as a vaccine can protect, and I did so knowing that the research was still vastly ongoing with the vaccines. After being fully vaccinated and boosted, and still contracting COVID, and having a worse case of it than my unvaccinated friends and family members, I still don't regret my decision to be vaccinated. But, the key here is that it is MY DECISION. I did so with the hope that it may protect me, and maybe it did, maybe it didn't.

But, a vaccine passport is not good for Montgomery County. Many local business owners I've spoken with are 100% against mandates and passports. Such a law will take money out of their pockets in order to enforce it, they may have to hire more employees just to 'check' passports (or purchase expensive software to scan the passports), and it will slow down business for many. Furthermore, with local counties who do not require passports, it is very easy for Montgomery County residents to simply take their business and dollars to Frederick County, Howard County, and many other places. What a shame for the local businesses of Montgomery County. This passport will be one more thing that makes it such a challenge to own a small business in this county.

Hasn't it been clear to all of us that the vaccine is MAYBE protecting just those who receive the vaccine? Maybe. However, simply because I'm vaccinated does not make me fear being around someone who is unvaccinated. The unvaccinated are not spreading it any more than the vaccinated at this point - it seems about equal as far as the CDC numbers go. Some studies show that the vaccinated are spreading it MORE than those unvaccinated. This was further acknowledged by Mr. Albornoz when he said that the passport system would be a symbolic gesture and not one that has true public health validity or efficacy. Why then would we be trying to support this?

Right now our country needs unity. We need to have leaders who stop creating an atmosphere where neighbors are pitted against neighbors, friends and family members feel like they need to be afraid of other friends or family members. Can't this leadership start here - in this county that I've grown to love? I've lived here for 21 years and used to be enamored with the county. Solid leadership, people standing up for what is RIGHT rather than what is 'new' or 'trending' or 'newsworthy' right now is the best thing - for our county and for our country. You are a leader. Act like one. Vote against the Vaccine Passports (and really any other mandate).

Sincerely,

Lindsay Haley