

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

November 11, 2021

The Honorable Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

As the nation approaches holiday season, we ask that you put in place requirements for airline passengers to provide proof of full vaccination against COVID-19 or a negative test to board a domestic flight. We also ask that safety protocols in place for trains and other popular modes of public transportation continue to be updated to reflect the best available data to prevent the spread of COVID-19. This is a necessary and long overdue step toward ensuring all Americans feel safe and confident while traveling and reduce the chances of yet another devastating winter surge.

We applaud your adoption of vaccine requirements for international air travelers coming to the United States. Implementation of these science-based requirements is critical to reducing COVID-19 transmission risk for passengers, crewmembers, and U.S. destination communities. Applying similar strategies to domestic air travel would ensure Americans can travel safely to see their loved ones during the holidays while also limiting household introduction and spread of COVID-19 from visiting family and friends.

Many Americans remain reluctant to spending extended periods of time in enclosed public spaces due to the risk of COVID-19 exposure. Requiring proof of vaccination or a negative test for domestic flights will help alleviate these concerns for traveling. Further, this type of COVID-19 vaccine and testing requirement has been endorsed by prominent voices in the public health community.ⁱ

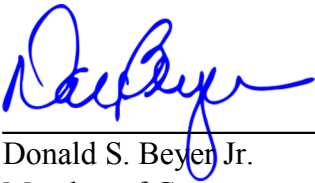
Implementing such a requirement can also be a valuable tool to support the recovery of the tourism and hospitality industries. Witnesses before the Senate Commerce Subcommittee on Tourism, Trade, and Export Promotion testified that domestic business spending this year is projected to be just 57 percent of their 2019 levels.ⁱⁱ It will take at least four years for the travel and tourism sectors to be restored to their pre-pandemic levels. In particular, the aviation industry has sustained \$35 billion in losses in 2020.ⁱⁱⁱ Recovery of these industries will only occur when American travelers are confident that they are safe during indoor activities, including when traveling, whether in airports or on the planes themselves.

As the success of vaccine requirements in the private sector has shown, requiring proof of vaccination for domestic flights has the potential to increase vaccine acceptance among the public. Research by the Kaiser Family Foundation has shown that unvaccinated people would be significantly more likely to get fully vaccinated if it was a requirement to fly on an airplane.^{iv} It

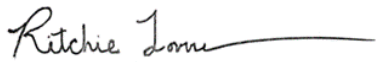
is in the best interest of our nation's public health to adopt these vaccination requirements for U.S. air travel.

Thank you for your consistent dedication in promoting science-based public health measures to keep Americans safe and healthy. As you continue to work tirelessly to finally end this pandemic, we ask that you ensure vaccine protocol is in place for domestic air travel so that every opportunity has been taken to get eligible Americans vaccinated as quickly as possible.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Dianne Feinstein
United States Senator



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Kathy E. Manning
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David J. Trone
Member of Congress



Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



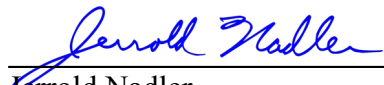
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



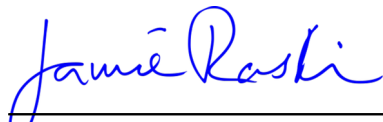
Ed Case
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
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Alan Lowenthal
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Jamie Raskin
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Linda T. Sánchez
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Marcy Kaptur
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Mikie Sherrill
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Ted W. Lieu
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Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



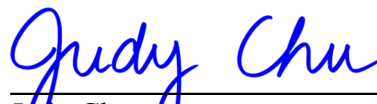
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



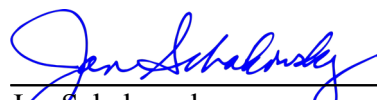
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



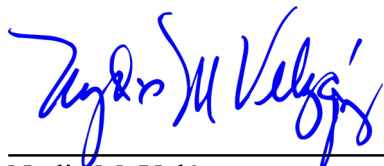
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



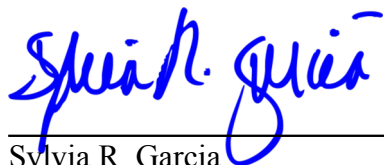
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress

- ⁱ Kreutz, Liz. "Growing number of medical experts urge COVID vaccine requirement for domestic air travel." ABC7, 4 Oct. 2021, <https://abc7news.com/vaccine-mandates-travel-coronavirus-mandate-domestic/11080958/>. ; Schaben, Allen J. "Dr. Anthony Fauci says he 'would support' a vaccine mandate for air travel." NBC News, 14 Sept. 2021, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/dr-anthony-fauci-says-he-would-support-vaccine-mandate-air-n1279131>. ; Emanuel, Ezekiel J. and John P. Moore. Letter to Senator Dianne Feinstein. 15 Oct. 2021. Twitter, <https://twitter.com/SenFeinstein/status/1449098656477589512?s=20>.; "Big Cities Health Coalition Strongly Supports the U.S. Air Travel Public Safety Act." Big Cities Health Coalition, 12 Oct. 2021, www.bigcitieshealth.org/big-cities-health-coalition-strongly-supports-the-u-s-air-travel-public-safety-act. Press Release.; "Feinstein Introduces Bill Requiring COVID-19 Vaccine, Negative Test or Recovery Documentation for Domestic Air Travel." United States Senator Dianne Feinstein, 29 Sept. 2021, <https://www.feinstein.senate.gov/public/index.cfm/press-releases?id=09C19B4C-EB81-4CD1-B793-486B573EA1D1>. Press Release.
- ⁱⁱ Barnes, Tori E. "Written Statement of Ms. Tori Emerson Barnes, Executive Vice President, Public Affairs and Policy U.S. Travel Association on 'Legislative Solutions to Revive Travel and Tourism and Create Jobs.'" U.S. Travel Association, 12 Sep. 2021, <https://www.commerce.senate.gov/services/files/1F60E068-4CAC-4B96-A42F-A96308F900F7>. ; "GTS: Global Highlights & Risks, September 2020." Tourism Economics, <https://www.tourismeconomics.com/about/economist-perspectives-2/archive/economist-perspectives-1/>.
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- ^{iv} Hamel, Liz, et al. "KFF COVID-19 Vaccine Monitor: June 2021." *Kaiser Family Foundation*, 30 June 2021, www.kff.org/coronavirus-covid-19/poll-finding/kff-covid-19-vaccine-monitor-june-2021.