

January 17, 2022

Dear Councilmembers,

I am asking you to not enact the vaccine passport program for Montgomery County.

Our businesses are already stretched thin because of economic crises and difficulty getting enough workers. Businesses will have to do one more thing by checking each customer's data.

Additional enforcement will be needed to enact this passport program which will already add to the lack of workers in this county.

How will deception be avoided for all the ways vaccine proof can be shown? Not everyone has a proper photo ID. How do we ensure that families aren't lying if people don't have proper photo IDs to match the vaccination proof?

As a homeschooling family in this county, we use sports programs for our PE requirement. According to the wording on the proposal, it will be difficult to have a place our students can go unless they are vaccinated. It seems that our swim place and gymnastics place will both be impacted while they are already at a loss of workers and business. Both places have had great measures for safety. To make a blanket program is wrong. The Supreme Court pointed this out with OSHA making a blanket program of vaccine mandates. OSHA can't prove across the board that not having the vaccine has caused spread in all places. The health officer tried this on private schools in fall 2020. The private schools had measures in place but were given a blanket shut down without any specific guidelines to prove they should be shut down.

Vaccinations for children under ages 16 continue to be in emergency status. By the time they are fully approved this current surge will be over. No one should be forced to take a vaccination that is still under emergency status.

The only time I have ever had to have any vaccination was for school or overseas travel. The vaccinations I had for school and overseas had been tested much longer. This has crossed the line to everyone having to get them as the goal. I have never had to take the flu shot for entrance into anything as I am not in healthcare. No other vaccination has ever been authorized to be taken more than 1x per year. How many boosters is it going to take in so short a time for you to stop the mandates. Israel is even more tightly mandated with most of their population if not all vaccinated with even younger ages now working on their 4th booster, yet they continue to have spread. This shows that spread still happens regardless of vaccination.

You say this is temporary, but mandates keep being implemented and there is no trust in what you say anymore. You keep trying to pass things in order to mitigate the risk that comes. It isn't working. By the time you pass this mandate, we will be within a few weeks of this surge's peak. You have no measures for when it will end. As MCPS did with their written plan of

measures, they didn't even follow what they planned with going virtual at 5% or more of COVID cases per school. They threw the whole plan out the window. The council has also taken back the 85% threshold for fully vaccinated residents to stop the mask mandate with no measures to stop wearing them again. If you pass this passport program, you must include a measure for it to stop and follow your plan.

Having a passport program for vaccinations will add a false sense of security that people can safely go out to eat without masking while eating and do other activities like the gym without fear of transmission. Transmission is still occurring amongst vaccinated people regardless of unvaccinated people in their presence. Some fully boosted individuals are still getting hit hard with breakthrough cases and each of these individuals had other health conditions.

The current presidential administration started its term with declaring how important it was to bring unity back to this country, yet the administration continues to put the blame on a class of people, the unvaccinated. By passing this passport program in Montgomery County you are adding to the disunity in this country. You are segregating a class of people. I know of several people who aren't vaccinated because of medical reasons but to get a medical exemption is very difficult and requires unending testing to participate in society that requires a current test to carry this exemption. Many of these people who have medical reasons are pro vaccination but for certain reasons these vaccinations will not be good for their body and the concerns outweigh the risk of getting Covid. Putting blame on the unvaccinated further divides our county and this country.

People will avoid moving here because of your illogical and tight segregation policies. You claim diversity but you won't let the opposition have equal access. You claim they can have equal access by choice. What happened to having a choice in what goes in our bodies?

People will take their businesses elsewhere because of your mandate. Yes, some businesses have already established their requirements of vaccination proof and many champion your proposal; however, not everyone or every business agrees with your proposal. Allow for businesses to make their own choice and customers to frequent those establishments if they feel it is safer there. Many residents of Montgomery County have traveled elsewhere for their activities to have more freedoms. This takes the money elsewhere out of this county. Have you polled all your businesses or only the ones who agree with your proposal?

Health officials have claimed that the worst of this current surge will cease by the end of January. There is no expected end date on the proposal. You began this pandemic with 2 weeks to flatten the curve as your message, then you have continually changed your enforcement as this virus continually changes. With each enforcement you have had tighter control on our lives. As the vaccination rate continues to increase for this county, the virus transmission has not decreased even with a mask mandate in place. The majority of the people of our county have been masking along with myself when I am out in public; however, the virus continues to spread. Vaccinated people continue to spread the virus. I have heard of several instances where a group of all vaccinated people were together and all of them got COVID from

each other. The main reason for vaccination is to protect individuals from hospitalization and death; therefore, unvaccinated people do not threaten vaccinated people. I have seen no proof that unvaccinated people spread it more than vaccinated people.

Thank you for considering to not enact this vaccination passport program.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rebekah Esch". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name and last name clearly distinguishable.

Rebekah Esch
Germantown MD