

New Hampshire House Speaker Files Bill to Block Vaccine Mandate

Bill would blunt impact of President Biden's new federal vaccine requirements to "prevent federal overreach, protect our citizens and prevent worker shortages should this mandate take place."

By [The Center Square](#)

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New Hampshire House Speaker Sherman Packard is working on legislation that would ban state or local enforcement of COVID-19 vaccine mandates.

Packard, a Londonderry Republican, said his office is working on a bill that is aimed at blunting the impact of President Joe Biden's new federal vaccine requirements to "prevent federal overreach, protect our citizens and prevent worker shortages should this mandate take place."

"The end goal is to find a workable solution to this latest development out of Washington that is evolving as we learn more about the mandate," Packard said in a statement to House GOP members. "We have made it clear that government mandates are not the path to success for vaccination rates and will only cause further division in this country."

Packard urged constituents to reach out to congressional lawmakers and ask them to "speak out against this tyrannical policy that would displace thousands of workers and devastate our economy."

Packard's proposal, which was filed with the Office of Legislative Services, would need to be considered in the next legislative session that gets underway in January.

Biden's mandate will require employers with more than 100 workers to require them to be vaccinated or tested for COVID-19 weekly. The new rules will apply to federal workers and contractors who do business with the federal government. Companies face fines of up to \$14,000 per violation, Biden administration officials said.

The plan will also require vaccinations for about 17 million health care workers at hospitals and other facilities that receive federal Medicare or Medicaid funding.

The White House estimates the mandates will affect as many as 100 million Americans who are still not vaccinated against the virus, including thousands of workers in New Hampshire.

New Hampshire is not one of the 26 states that have a “state plan” agreement with the federal government requiring them to enforce workplace health and safety regulations.

Republican Gov. Chris Sununu [said he opposes Biden’s vaccine mandate](#) and expects New Hampshire will eventually join legal challenges against the nationwide requirements.

The state’s Attorney General, John Formella, was one of 20 Republican attorneys general [who wrote to Biden last week](#) urging him to drop his vaccine requirement for employers, calling the plan “disastrous and counterproductive.”

New Hampshire, like most states, has seen an uptick in COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations, with active infections averaging about 400 per day, according to state health officials.

Only 54.3% of New Hampshire residents are fully vaccinated, according to the state Department of Health and Human Services. Nearly 60% have had at least one shot, the agency says.

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