



SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
1 000 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

APR 23 2025

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Providing Supplemental Remedies for Service Members and Veterans Negatively Impacted by the Department of Defense Defunct Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Mandate

On February 6, 2025, I directed the Department to make things right for the Service members who were subjected to the Department's unfair, overbroad, and unnecessary coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine mandate. Since that time the Department has sent a formal apology to each former Service member involuntarily separated solely due to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate and invited them, along with anyone who voluntarily left the military due to that mandate, to apply to return to service. While those actions represent major progress, I believe that additional guidance is necessary to take care of the thousands of Service members who were unjustly impacted by the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

I hereby direct the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness to provide additional guidance to the Military Department Review Boards concerning the review of requests from Service members and former Service members adversely impacted by the COVID-19 vaccine mandate. This guidance will facilitate, as appropriate, the removal of adverse actions based solely on refusal to take the COVID-19 vaccine (or requesting a medical or religious/administrative accommodation), discharge upgrades for individuals involuntarily separated solely for refusing to take the COVID-19 vaccine whose service was characterized as less than fully honorable, and appropriate remedies for Service members who suffered a wide variety of other career setbacks resulting from their principled refusal to take the COVID-19 vaccine.

Through these efforts we will continue to restore confidence in our military as we recruit and retain a Force that meets the highest necessary standards. Our Service members, and our Nation, deserve no less.

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