

January 16, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The Reserve Organization of America, the nation's only exclusive advocate for the Reserve and National Guard, urges you to immediately reinstate all service members discharged for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccine, stop processing pending COVID-19 vaccine exemption waivers, and provide 100 percent back pay to eligible reinstated service members.

Reinstatement with full back pay is the right thing to do, now that rescission of the Aug. 24, 2021, and Nov. 30, 2021, vaccination requirements affecting both the active and reserve components has become law with passage of the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2023. The reversal in our eyes has the effect of nullification.

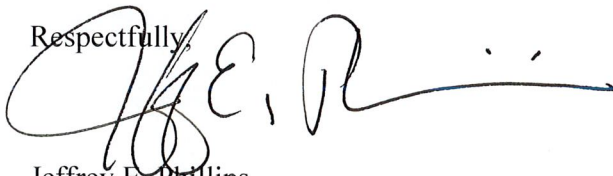
Without going into the sobering details (you know them all too well, Mr. President), we cannot afford the dismissal of some 8,400 trained and qualified young service members who have sworn to serve their country. Nor can we afford the bureaucratic expense and potential losses involved in processing COVID-19 vaccination exemption waivers to the tune of 9,068 members of the Army, 4,309 in the Navy, 3,740 in the Marine Corps, some 11,000 in the Air Force, and 1,350 in the Coast Guard.

ROA urges 100 percent back pay for all service members reinstated. For one thing, the NDAA effectively makes plain they were unnecessarily discharged. They have been out looking for work, some of them with families to care for. Again, it's simply the right thing to do. From a strictly fiscal perspective, it's cheaper to retain (in this case regain) quality than try to hire it, especially given the difficulty of finding good recruits.

ROA believes that reinstating these patriots, granting them back pay, and stopping any further waiver processing, complies with the spirit of the law, enhances readiness by enhancing the force's strength, and shows those who "are on the ramps" – and those considering joining their ranks – that America does right by its military.

ROA appreciates your consideration of these proposals and stands ready to work with your administration on this and other prospective areas of mutual interest.

Respectfully,



Jeffrey E. Phillips  
Maj. Gen., U.S. Army (Ret.)  
Executive Director