

Personal statement regarding workplace vaccine mandate.

I am employed by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. On Wednesday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland announced that all employees must be vaccinated by November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2021 or face termination. There will be limited exemptions made for medical and sincerely held religious beliefs and all other employees will need to show proof of vaccination to remain employed.

This whole situation is so surreal to me. On April 4<sup>th</sup>, 2020 I received a phone call from my previous employer of 9 years saying they were letting me go due to the pandemic. It wasn't just me; it was almost my entire department. It wasn't until November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020 that I was able to start a new position with the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. I took a large step back and a large reduction in salary in order to obtain a long-term opportunity with the bank. And now, less than a year later, I will be unemployed once again.

I know I am not in a unique position. I know that my pain and suffering pales in comparison to that of many other people who have suffered or lost loved ones to COVID-19. But my pain is real to me and the pain and stress this entire situation is putting on my family is real to us. For years, I have been the single earner for my family. For years, my employment has meant benefits in addition to a paycheck for my family. And now, the Cleveland Federal Reserve Bank is taking this away from us based on a decision that is completely hypocritical for what they stand for. This is a rushed and hasty decision based on continuously evolving studies on the effectiveness and risks associated with the vaccine. Above all else, this decision should NOT be legal.

One of the core values of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is Inclusion. I'm starting to question what that means exactly because I sure feel excluded. I have a real conviction about rushing to get the vaccine. I am relatively young, I'm healthy, I've already had COVID 19 at the beginning of 2021 and I am working from home. Dr. Fauci recently stated in an interview that while the vaccine works to prevent sickness and death, it is showing that vaccinated people are carrying similar viral loads as unvaccinated people. Recent data from the CDC shows that the success of the vaccine is correlated to the same trends in how the virus impacts infected individuals. The vaccine works best if you are younger and healthy and is less effective if you are older or have some sort of existing health issue. With all of that considered and the fact that there are new studies released from our country and others questioning the effectiveness and longevity of the vaccine, why would I get the "jab" as our HR person so flippantly called it on the call when they announced this policy? Well, the only reason I would get it is because my employer mandated it. How is it that in a free country, where there is complete uncertainty that I need this medically, that my employer is able to force me to take it or put me out on the street?

Does that sound like something anyone would have accepted 10 years ago? 5 years ago? I know we are in a crisis situation, but we are the United States of America. We are champions of ingenuity and innovation. Why is it that there is only one solution offered by my employer- the vaccine? There are many other safe and effective treatments available that should be considered viable alternatives to vaccine. Why is it that an employer can take our medical freedom away from us by saying we must get a shot that is in its experimental phase, or be fired? As I stated earlier, one of the core values of the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland is Inclusion. Well, I feel excluded. I feel excluded for not wanting to put something in my body that I am not comfortable with and that Dr. Fauci says won't protect others. I am skeptical that it will end with this vaccine requirement. If we let companies decide something as personal requiring a medical treatment to stay employed, then there is absolutely nothing stopping companies from other mandates that erode our personal freedoms. It appears they have been given free rein to do the work that the government cannot, because of they know this is government overreach. It is a convenient back door that is now very much a reality that is ruining lives.

I don't feel safe. In the meeting when the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland announced this, one of the main reasons they leaned on, was to keep their employees safe. On November 1<sup>st</sup>, because I won't be forced into a medical procedure, I will lose my job at the worst time of the year to get a job. I will lose my job 1 month before I would have been paid an annual bonus. I will lose my job one month before Christmas. I will lose my job and I will no longer have income or benefits for my family. I don't feel safe. Why is the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland not interested in protecting me and my family? Why am I being excluded from a company whose core value is Inclusion.

There has not been enough time and enough analysis to determine if this vaccine really has the impact it is sold to us to have. Dr. Fauci says you have to follow the science. I truly believe we have smart people that work at the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. People who have strong critical thinking skills. People who look at all sides of a situation prior to making a decision. This is however, the institution that crafts monetary policy for the most powerful nation in the world. It is surprising to me that they would come to this decision, this early in the process. It is surprising that it is even legal for them to do so.

It is also surprising to me that our government would support this. You are all smart people as well, and I mean that sincerely. You are supposed to be making informed decisions using your critical thinking skills looking at data from all sides and sources with the responsibility to protect your citizens and our rights. You have to agree that as we follow the science the data and results are evolving. Countries with extremely high vaccination rates are locking back down and being elevated on the CDC advisory lists, Dr. Fauci himself is scaling back expectations of vaccine results and there are many other examples. How, in good conscience, can you allow companies to erode personal freedoms based on inconclusive results? I implore you to protect our freedoms by blocking companies from evoking vaccine mandates as a condition of employment. Please, save my family and the many others who are skeptical and afraid. Because that is what I am right now, I'm afraid. I need your help. My family needs your help. Our state needs your help. Thank you.

Ryan Hayden



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