

Greetings! My name is Jennifer Castle. I'm the government documents librarian at Tennessee State University, an HBCU in Nashville, and your new *DttP* editor. I'm excited to work with everyone to contribute to scholarly conversations on government information.

Before I begin, I want to express my sincere gratitude to my predecessor, Laura Sare, for her kindness, patience, and conversation as we made this transition. I'm pleased she wishes to remain a reviewer because her editorial insights are invaluable. I'd like to thank Tim Clifford, our wonderful production editor at ALA, for providing me with support while I learn the ropes. And last (but certainly not least), I want to recognize the *DttP* reviewers for their hard work and flexibility.

A little about me: I've been working with government information for more than a decade, previously as a newspaper journalist and now as a gov docs librarian. I'm active in the GODORT and Politics, Policy, and International Relations groups.

I would like to briefly discuss the Biden administration's efforts to mandate vaccinations for federal employees, military personnel (active duty, reserves, or National Guard), health care professionals, and workers at businesses with 100 or more employees.¹ Naturally, some states felt the administration was overreaching and challenged the mandates all the way to the Supreme Court. January 13, the justices handed down two decisions: employees at Medicare or Medicaid-certified facilities must vaccinate; and those at larger companies do not.²

A week later, a federal judge in Texas ruled the administration cannot enforce a mandate on federal employees and issued an injunction to cease nationwide efforts.³ The same day, Kansas lawmakers introduced Senate Bill 370, also known as the Defend the Guard Act, "to establish when the Kansas national guard may be released into active-duty combat and to prohibit COVID-19 vaccination requirements for national guard members."⁴

However, a US district court judge in Rhode Island denied a request to block the state from enforcing the vaccine mandate, writing, "Courts in this country have held for over a century that mandatory vaccination laws are a valid exercise of a state's police powers, and such laws have withstood constitutional challenges."⁵

On February 2, the Biden administration released its "Commitment to Global Health" statement, which outlines plans and initiatives for global health programs, listing

supporting and strengthening the World Health Organization and leading the international COVID-19 response among its pledges.⁶ Clearly, the COVID battles, whether over health care policy or politics, are far from over.

February 4 marked 900,000 Americans dead from COVID-19, and my adopted state of Tennessee tops the list of highest number of deaths in lower-vaccinated states.⁷ I must wonder how many of those lives could have been saved if efforts to staunch the spread of the virus had been implemented earlier without being politicized.

Notes

1. "FACT SHEET: President Biden to Announce New Actions to Get More Americans Vaccinated and Slow the Spread of the Delta Variant," The White House, July 29 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/07/29/fact-sheet-president-biden-to-announce-new-actions-to-get-more-americans-vaccinated-and-slow-the-spread-of-the-delta-variant/>; "Fact Sheet: Biden Administration Announces Details of Two Major Vaccination Policies," The White House, November 4, 2021, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/11/04/fact-sheet-biden-administration-announces-details-of-two-major-vaccination-policies/>.
2. "21A240 Biden v. Missouri (01/13/2022)," Supreme Court of the United States, January 13, 2022, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/21a240_d18e.pdf; "21A244 National Federation of Independent Business v. OSHA (01/13/2022)," Supreme Court of the United States, January 13, 2022, https://www.supremecourt.gov/opinions/21pdf/21a244_hgci.pdf.
3. Jeffrey Vincent Brown, "Feds for Medical Freedom, et al. v. Joseph R. Biden, Jr., et AL.," PacerMonitor, January 21, 2021, https://www.pacermonitor.com/view/PDMVBYQ/Feds_for_Medical_Freedom_et_al_v_Biden_Jr_et_al__txsdce-21-00356__0036.0.pdf.
4. "SB 370 Defend the Guard Act," Kansas Legislature, January 21, 2022, http://www.kslegislature.org/li/b2021_22/measures/documents/sb370_00_0000.pdf.
5. Katie Mulvaney, "Federal Judge Refuses to Block Rhode Island COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate for Health-Care Staff," *Providence Journal*, January 10, 2022, <https://www>

- .providencejournal.com/story/news/courts/2022/01/07/ri-covid-vaccine-mandate-federal-judge-refused-block/9135375002/.
6. "FACT SHEET: The Biden Administration's Commitment to Global Health," The White House, February 2, 2022, <https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/state-ments-releases/2022/02/02/fact-sheet-the-biden-administrations-commitment-to-global-health/>.
 7. Nigel Chiwaya, "900,000 Dead: Covid Deaths are Surging in Low-Vaccination States," *NBC News*, February 4, 2022, <https://www.nbcnews.com/news/us-news/900-000-dead-covid-deaths-are-surging-low-vaccination-states-n1288586>.