



Idaho State Rep. Priscilla Giddings: Conservatives Must Protect Healthcare Workers From Coronavirus Vaccine Mandates

As an Air Force pilot flying across three combat deployments, I accumulated 1,000 combat flight hours with a singular mission: providing air support for our frontline troops on the ground. I am once again providing close support as an Idaho State Representative — this time to healthcare workers fighting an ultimatum from Idaho's largest hospitals: "Take the jab or lose your job."

As one of only a few women who have had the opportunity to fly the jet lovingly referred to as the Warthog, my squadron gave me the callsign Altoid because they found me to be "curiously strong," just like the breathmint. But it has been my pleasure over the last few weeks to get to know an entire group of strong women — the essential healthcare workers of Idaho who are standing up to vaccine mandates that strip away their right to choose what is right for their body and their family.

Americans of all walks of life have gone out of their way to salute healthcare workers. They've been honored with a parade through New York City. The same city is planning to erect a monument in honor of the pandemic's essential workers. The airline JetBlue is giving 100,000 healthcare workers a pair of round-trip tickets at no cost. This is all part of a worldwide phenomenon of showing gratitude toward the doctors, nurses, first responders, and other hospital staff who answered the call of duty when they were needed most.

The gratitude is well deserved. Although many of us were fortunate enough to work from home during the pandemic, premature babies cannot receive neonatal intensive care via Zoom. Nor can surgical patients or those with other serious diseases, such as coronavirus. Many healthcare workers in Idaho I've spoken to have suffered from coronavirus themselves, which they consider "just another part of the job."

You'd think the giant healthcare systems that employ Idaho's essential healthcare workers would do everything they could to support their lifesaving work and respect their opinions as medical professionals.

Sadly, that isn't the case.

On July 8, three of Idaho's largest healthcare conglomerates, Saint Alphonsus, St. Luke's, and Primary



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Written by [Priscilla Giddings](#) on July 29, 2021

Health announced all their workers and volunteers must receive the coronavirus vaccine. Yes, even pregnant workers must get the vaccine, even though pregnant women were [excluded from the vaccine trials](#).

“The move also applies to contractors they work with,” according to [Boise State Public Radio](#). The employees, contractors, and volunteers at these three giant companies that do not receive the coronavirus vaccine by September 1 will be terminated. Taking away the choice to vaccinate from the brave men and women who put themselves on the frontline of the epidemic is unconscionable to me, so I set out to learn more about the people objecting to this mandate.

The organization [Health Freedom Idaho](#) has produced a [short video](#) about some of the women fighting back against the vaccine mandate. What it demonstrates is that this movement is fueled by dedicated caregivers, some of which have spent more than two decades providing life-saving care for the most vulnerable people in our society, such as premature infants.

“I am a healthcare worker and was essential and continued to work during the shutdown,” says a tearful nurse into the camera. She was joined by other nurses, who all broke down as they told the same story: They will soon be terminated if they do not comply with the new coronavirus vaccination requirement. “It’s not just us,” one nurse says, pointing to her stomach. “We have babies we’re looking after too.”

These medical professionals do not believe the coronavirus vaccine is the right choice for them. In May, Tucker Carlson documented how many Americans feel the same way, and that it wasn’t too long ago that this was seen as a personal choice.

Breitbart News [reported](#) on Tucker’s monologue at the time:

Health decisions used to be considered personal choices. We didn’t ask about them. They were considered personal as recently, by the way, as last fall. It was in September of 2020, at the height of the presidential campaign that a CNN reporter asked Kamala Harris, whether she would be willing to take the coronavirus vaccine once it became available. Her response quote, “Well, I think that’s going to be an issue for all of us.” Harris responded, “I will say that I would not trust Donald Trump.”

A month later at the vice-presidential debate, Harris was, if anything, more emphatic on the subject, quote, “If Donald Trump tells us we should take the vaccine,” she declared, “I’m not going to take it.”

Kamala Harris has, of course, since changed her mind. She is no longer skeptical of the vaccine nor does she tolerate the skepticism of others. Instead, she is an enthusiastic participant in COVID Theater, and that’s really the only name for it.

I am not interested in debating whether any individual person should take the coronavirus vaccine. What I am interested in is the grave injustice occurring in Idaho, where employers are taking this personal medical decision out of the hands of professionals who deserve the right to choose what’s best for themselves without the threat of losing their job. As a mother and fellow human, it keeps me up at night. That’s why I proposed [House Bill 140](#) to the Idaho State Legislature. It would have prevented companies contracted with the state (medical facilities included) from discriminating against unvaccinated persons.



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After House Bill 140 passed the Idaho House, the State Senate failed to even give it a public hearing. But we aren't giving up on the healthcare workers who deserve the right to choose if the vaccine is right for them. We are urging conservatives to take action to defend the rights of their fellow citizens to not be discriminated against in the workplace.

For the citizens of Idaho, this means applying political pressure on the State Senate and the governor's office to demand action on the bill already passed by the House. For conservatives around the country, I urge you to contact your representatives to demand action on this topic *before* healthcare systems in your state take the same action against their employees.

Priscilla Giddings is a Republican member of the Idaho House of Representatives, representing District 7A. She is running for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor.

She served nine years active duty with the U.S. Air Force, including three combat deployments, accumulating 1,000 combat flight hours. Awarded "Top Gun" as A-10 fighter pilot, she is the author of Curiously Strong: A Female Fighter Pilot's Story of Developing Strength and won Idaho's 2018 Outstanding Woman Veteran Award. Visit her [Facebook page](#) to learn more.



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