



Written by [James Murphy](#) on October 19, 2021

Lightfoot Accuses Police Union Head of Trying to “Induce an Insurrection” Over Vax Mandates

Chicago Mayor Lori Lightfoot threw a rhetorical bomb at Chicago Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) president John Catanzara on Monday. Lightfoot accused Catanzara and the police union of attempting to “induce an insurrection” within the city’s police department.

During the [press conference](#), Lightfoot also accused Catanzara and the FOP of telling lies to its members about the vaccine mandate for city workers.

“What we’ve seen from the Fraternal Order of Police leadership is a lot of misinformation, and frankly flat out lies, in order to induce an insurrection, and we’re not having that. The law is on our side. We feel very confident about it,” she said.

As of Monday, Chicago police officers were being taken off duty and sent home without pay for not complying with Lightfoot’s mandate that police officers — and all city employees — be fully vaccinated with the experimental COVID-19 vaccines or subject themselves to twice-weekly testing for COVID-19 at their own expense and on their own time.

Lightfoot accused the police union and Catanzara in particular of using her unilateral vaccine mandate as a bargaining tool in contract negotiations.

“We believe that the [Fraternal Order of Police] leadership is trying to foment an illegal work stoppage or strike,” the mayor said. “We’re not having that, the contract is clear ... the police unions are not authorized to strike.”

The Mayor sounded awfully vindictive against Catanzara: “Let me be clear, [Fraternal Order of Police President] John Catanzara has destroyed his police career. Destroyed it. He is not fit. And he is never going to go back in any kind of active position. I don’t want him to lead these young officers astray, and have them destroy their careers like he has destroyed his.”

According to the City of Chicago, when Monday began, of the 12,770 employees of the Chicago Police Department, only 8,227 reported their vaccination status — a compliance rate of only 64 percent — leaving over 4,500 employees facing possible discipline.

Overall, the city reports that 79 percent of city employees have reported their vaccination status, with 84 percent of those employees reporting that they’re fully vaccinated. The only fly in the ointment, according to Lightfoot, is police and fire employees.

“If you take out police and fire employees, the percent jumps to 96 percent and 81 percent of respondents are fully vaccinated,” the mayor said. “[A] very small percentage of cops are refusing to



AP Images
Lori Lightfoot



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comply when directed to do so today.”

Lightfoot’s foil, Catanzara, was on Fox News on Friday calling Lightfoot’s policy “schizophrenic.” Catanzara compared the policy for city workers with the policy for the teacher’s union in Chicago: “The teachers have a different policy. The teachers are literally you’re vaccinated or you get tested. You don’t have to report your vaccine status. We have a mandate to report our vaccine status by midnight tonight. It doesn’t make any sense.”

“Everything from this mayor is a dictatorship. This is all about policy from the top. There was no public outcry [for] this policy to take effect. She just decided she was going to do it and push it on the entire city workforce across the board,” Catanzara said.

According to the FOP president, this is not simply a police issue. Catanzara claims that the fire department, first responders, laborers, and sanitation workers have all contacted his office to complain about the policy.

“Everybody across the board is up in arms about this mandate.” Catanzara concluded.

Catanzara says the members of his union remain unified against the mayor’s dictate — whatever the consequences.

“We had a meeting the other night, and our lodge had never been more filled with members,” Catanzara said. “They were willing to go into a no-pay status at midnight tonight and get sent home if that’s what was going to happen.”

In an effort to look strong on vaccinations, Lightfoot is putting her city at unnecessary risk. How many officers is she willing to send home in order to make her point? In a city with an epidemic of crime, Lightfoot seems to be willing to look past a few extra murders and armed robberies so long as she can report high vaccination rates for her workforce.



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