



Written by [Veronika Kyrylenko](#) on February 3, 2022

D.C. Restaurant Shut Down for Defying COVID Vax Mandate

A veteran-owned restaurant in Washington, D.C., has been shut down by the city after the owners served guests without asking about their COVID vaccination status. The restaurant owners were also “guilty” of not forcing their staff to wear masks.

This past Friday, The Big Board had its liquor license suspended by the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration after it was determined the establishment “violated public health guidelines.” According to a [Fox News report](#), the owners failed to enforce mask wearing for employees and did not check patrons’ COVID vaccination cards.



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Speaking with Laura Ingraham on Monday, the restaurant’s co-owner, Eric Flannery, said that he did not comply with the guidelines because they “didn’t make any sense.”

For example, Flannery did not wish to treat the servers as “second-class citizens” by forcing masks on them. That was “ridiculous,” he said, since the guests are not wearing any when eating and drinking.

Bewildered, Flannery added that he never thought that a policy that would prohibit people going places would ever be put in place in the United States.

“I never thought that in the capital city of the United States of America, it would be somewhat controversial to open up a bar where everybody was welcome,” he lamented.

On Tuesday, the city doubled down on its actions against the rebellious venue, and ordered it to shut down altogether.

The closure notice that was put on The Big Board’s door, according to the [Washington Examiner](#), cited food-code violations. It read, per the outlet, “The establishment is ordered closed until further notice for a violation(s) of the District of Columbia food code regulations (Title 25 of the DCMR), which presents an imminent health hazard(s) to the public.”

Washington Examiner provides that between January 14 and January 18, the restaurant received a verbal warning, a written warning, and two separate \$1,000 fines for failing to enforce the city’s COVID diktats, according to [data](#) from the Alcoholic Beverage Regulation Administration.

Flannery said he plans to appeal the city’s decision, per the outlet. He said, “When people asked me, ‘What are you going to get on the other side of this?’ I don’t know. I just know that I’m doing the right thing.”

The story of the brave restaurateurs defying authoritarian mandates gained attention on Capitol Hill. On Tuesday, some Republican lawmakers paid him a visit. Among the high-profile guests were Senator Rand Paul (R-Ky.) and Representatives Kevin Hern (R-Okla.), Thomas Massie (R-Ky.), Tim Burchett (R-



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Tenn.), and Victoria Spartz (R-Ind.).

“I’m incredibly proud ... and I’m very supportive of what he’s [Flannery] doing because he’s saying, ‘My individual liberty is worth the fight even if I lose my business.’ And he’s not giving up, he’s going to fight. It’s a big decision.... I’m proud of the owner for not submitting,” Senator Paul [told](#) the Daily Caller.

Senator Paul has previously blasted the premier Republican [Capitol Hill Club](#) over caving to the city’s COVID mandates. “I will not be a member of any club that acquiesces to a requirement to reveal your medical records,” Paul [said](#) on January 21.

Representative Massie defended the owners’ rights to protect their business. “It’s their livelihood, and each person I think needs to push back to the ability of their means,” he said.

He [added](#),

It the mandate is illogical, the only logical way is to defy it. If the mandate is unconstitutional, it is constitutional not to follow it. If the mandate is unscientific, the only scientific way is to ignore it.

Representative Spartz praised Flannery for defying the “Soviet-style” orders. She [tweeted](#), “Great to meet Eric from [@thebigboarddc](#) which is being shut down because he refused to give in to DC’s Soviet-style vax ID mandate. We applaud your fight for freedom, Eric! Great burgers & company!”

The Daily Caller’s Senior Congressional Correspondent Henry Rodgers has started a [GoFunMe page](#) to help pay “The Big Board’s fines. So far, the campaign raised more than \$30,000 for the business that believes that “everyone is welcome.”

“As has always been the case for us, everyone is welcome. This rule applies yesterday, today and tomorrow. Hopefully we’ll see you January 16th,” The Big Board [tweeted](#) a day before the city’s COVID mandate came into effect.

As *The New American* has previously [reported](#), Democratic Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser issued the mandate January 15, ordering all indoor businesses to require patrons 12 years old and older to provide proof of receiving at least one dose of the COVID-19 shot along with a government-issued ID. The order also requires masks to be worn indoors at all times, only to be removed while eating or drinking.

When asked about The Big Board closure, Bowser [said](#) she did not “want to shut anybody down.”

She added, “We want to give people support, advice, supplies, help, whatever they need, but we do need them to follow the regulations.”

WUSA-TV [reported](#) that many other restaurants in the area are quietly ignoring the vaccine-card mandate. Half of the establishments visited by the undercover reporter did not check on his vaccination status.



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