

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 5, 2022

The Honorable Rochelle Walensky
Director
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, Georgia 30329

Dear Director Walensky,

We write to express our concern regarding the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) travel restrictions for international travelers entering the United States. The CDC's current policy which requires non-U.S. citizens to present proof of receiving the COVID-19 vaccine is a barrier to entry for many individuals that is unnecessary to protect public health and safety and is unequally applied only to visitors entering legally.

On October 25, 2021, President Biden issued a [Proclamation](#) which prohibited non-U.S. citizen, nonimmigrant travelers from entering the United States without proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19. There are other ways to verify a traveler's health status which do not require proof of COVID-19 vaccination which other nations have used successfully. According to [data](#) compiled by the *New York Times*, over 125 countries around the world allow unvaccinated travelers to enter their borders with no restrictions or they permit foreign travelers to test for COVID-19 or quarantine upon arrival. This includes developed countries like the United Kingdom, Ireland, Austria, Norway, Denmark, and Sweden. The wave of travel restrictions being repealed in the United Kingdom began in February 2022, but the United States continues to impose an unnecessary vaccination entry requirement even when COVID-19 caseloads have declined. Not only does this policy ignore the science, but it also violates individuals' personal health decisions that are made in conjunction with their physicians.

While we understand the CDC offers a ["humanitarian exemption"](#) so that certain unvaccinated travelers can enter the United States, we believe the exemption is too narrow. Additionally, in the fine print, the CDC states that exempted individuals must agree to become fully vaccinated within 60 days of arriving in the country. This caveat does nothing to help those travelers who would seek an exemption precisely because they have made the personal decision to remain unvaccinated. Moreover, this policy is completely hypocritical as the millions of illegal immigrants streaming across our southern border [are not subjected to a vaccine requirement](#). We should not force international visitors who intend to be in our country for only a limited time, and are willing to take a test to prove they do not have COVID-19 at the time of entry, to violate their beliefs whereas illegal immigrants who break our laws face no consequences.

Americans have largely moved on from the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent Gallup poll [found](#) that 31 percent of American adults report that they are “very” or “somewhat worried” about being infected with the virus while 64 percent say the pandemic is “getting better.” Even Dr. Fauci, the chief White House medical advisor, [confirmed](#) that “we are certainly right now in this country out of the pandemic phase.” It is past time for the CDC to revisit its travel restrictions that mandate COVID-19 vaccines for non-U.S. citizen, nonimmigrant travelers. The United States should never force the loved ones of American citizens to violate their personal health decisions, and we urge you to take swift action to repeal these travel restrictions.

Sincerely,



Lloyd Smucker
Member of Congress



W. Gregory Steube
Member of Congress



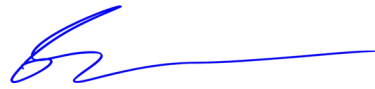
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