

Court Officers Benevolent Association Of Nassau County

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Peter A. Piciulo
President

September 11, 2021

Evelyn Maffucci
1st Vice-President

To: Chief Judge Janet DiFiore
From: Court Officers Benevolent Association of Nassau County

Tom Gilligan
2nd Vice-President

We are writing to you today on behalf of our members to express our deepest concern over yesterday's release of a Memorandum outlining the Mandatory Vaccination Program.

Robert M. Abarno
Treasurer

You first announced your intention to mandate the vaccination of our workforce on Aug 25. This was followed by an Aug 27 email to all employees from Chief Administrative Judge Larry Marks stating the mandatory vaccination program will take effect on September 27, 2021. At the time, that was only one month away. We have made numerous requests to negotiate the terms and conditions of this program. As you are aware, on Aug 27 we sent a formal demand to negotiate to the Director of Labor Relations. That demand has gone unanswered.

Leslie J. Hadnagy
Secretary

We find the lack of any meaningful negotiations with the Unions that represent the employees of the court system appalling. As of the writing of this letter, no such negotiations have happened. This is the single most drastic change to the terms and conditions of our employment to ever take place. Considering the looming deadline that has been imposed (without our input) and your seeming unwillingness to discuss this extremely important issue, we found ourselves in the unfortunate position of being forced to take legal action.

Many issues need to be considered and, by law, negotiated with the Union before implementing this program. Among them are:

- Consequences for failure to obtain the vaccine, including the ability to work and whether UCS intends to discipline employees who fail to comply.
- Timelines for workers to be vaccinated.
- Exceptions to the vaccination requirements and the exemption process (including appeals) for religious, medical, and other accommodations.

You know all this. You understand this. You are a Judge. You're the Chief Judge. To deny our members' right to be heard flies in the face of the bedrock principles on which the justice system is founded.

The effect this program will have on the workforce is enormous. There is a segment of our membership that will retire over this. There is a segment that will be prevented from working. There is a segment that is going to get vaccinated under duress in order to keep their job, feed their family, and protect their retirement pension. The overall morale issue is enormous. It includes those members who are fully vaccinated, believe it is the right thing to do, but most importantly believe in an individual's right to make their own choice. Some of our members are at the beginning of their careers and will remember this until the day they retire. How fitting is this then, that your latest announcement was made on the eve of the 20th anniversary of 9/11? We will never forget.

We respectfully request that you postpone the implementation of this program until the Union has an opportunity to engage in full and fair negotiations with your representatives.

Very Truly Yours,

COBANC Executive Board

Peter A. Piciulo
President

Evelyn Maffucci
1st Vice-President

Tom Gilligan
2nd Vice-President

Robert M. Abarro
Treasurer

Leslie Hadnagy
Secretary