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Congress of the United States  
House of Representatives

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February 27, 2023

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III  
Secretary of Defense  
U.S. Department of Defense  
1000 Defense Pentagon  
Washington, D.C. 20301

Dear Secretary Austin:

I write regarding your January 26, 2023, response to my letter regarding the COVID-19 vaccines and the opportunity for the Department of Defense (DOD) to be a leader in helping the medical community – and the world – gain a greater understanding of the performance of the vaccines, the effectiveness of natural immunity, and gathering robust data that can inform sound medical decisions within the Armed Forces.

This letter, which was sent to you on August 30, 2022, and did not receive a response until nearly five months later, was signed by 20 Members of Congress with various medical backgrounds, myself included. As a podiatric surgeon who has spent time in the public health arena, as an Iraq War veteran and combat surgeon who just recently retired from the United States Army Reserve, and as a Member of Congress who serves as a co-chair of the GOP Doctors Caucus, I am tremendously disappointed to receive nothing more than a four sentence response to our letter that answers exactly none of the questions asked. Instead, the response simply states something Members of Congress already know – that Congress directed you to rescind the COVID-19 vaccination mandate for members of the Armed Forces.

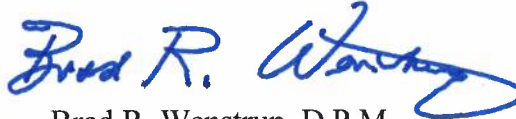
As stated in the letter, DOD should be taking this opportunity to collect data from our entire military so that we may learn more about the performance of the vaccine and the impact of previous infection in order to inform data-driven vaccine policies for our Armed Forces and civilians.

From your response, it is clear that this letter was not carefully reviewed nor were the questions carefully considered. I sent this letter to you in good faith, with the belief that those within the Department of Defense, particularly those with an interest in military medicine and the health and wellbeing of our warfighters, would want to consider ways to incorporate a data-driven approach to a relatively novel medical immunity innovation: the mRNA vaccines, as well as evaluate well-established science: infection-acquired immunity.

Leadership starts at the top. I am resending the exact letter that was sent to your office on August 30<sup>th</sup> with the hope that it will receive more thoughtful consideration this second time around. As

it has been five months since our letter was sent, and the recent response I received leaves the letter unaddressed, I am requesting a response to the original outreach no later than March 6, 2023.

Sincerely,



Brad R. Wenstrup, D.P.M.  
Member of Congress

ENCLOSURES (2)

Cc: The Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Speaker of the House of Representatives  
The Honorable Mike Rogers, Chairman, House Armed Services Committee  
The Honorable Adam Smith, Ranking Member, House Armed Services Committee  
The Honorable Michael C. Burgess, M.D.  
The Honorable Andy Harris, M.D.  
The Honorable Roger W. Marshall, M.D.  
The Honorable John Barrasso, M.D.  
The Honorable Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
The Honorable Neal P. Dunn, M.D.  
The Honorable Ronny L. Jackson, M.D.  
The Honorable Brian Babin, D.D.S.  
The Honorable Diana Harshbarger, Pharm. D.  
The Honorable Mike Simpson, D.M.D.  
The Honorable Mariannette J. Miller-Meeks, M.D.  
The Honorable Gregory F. Murphy, M.D.  
The Honorable Earl L. "Buddy" Carter, R.Ph.  
The Honorable Jefferson Van Drew, D.M.D.  
The Honorable Scott DesJarlais, M.D.  
The Honorable A. Drew Ferguson, IV, D.M.D.  
The Honorable John Joyce, M.D.  
The Honorable Mark Green, M.D.  
The Honorable Paul Gosar, D.D.S.  
President Joseph R. Biden, Jr.  
Lieutenant General Letitia Crosland, Director, Defense Health Agency  
Lieutenant General Robert I. Miller, Surgeon General, United States Air Force and  
United States Space Force  
Lieutenant General R. Scott Dingle, Surgeon General, United States Army  
Rear Admiral Bruce L. Gillingham, Surgeon General, United States Navy  
Colonel Sarah B. Goldman, Director, Congressionally Directed Medical Research  
Programs  
The Honorable Dawn O'Connell, Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response,  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
The Honorable Rochelle Walensky, Director, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention