

Reinstating Servicemembers Discharged Due to Vaccine Mandates

Administration Actions:

President Trump has issued an Executive Order (EO) titled [Reinstating Service Members Discharged under the Military's COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate](#) which requires the Secretary of Defense or Secretary of Homeland Security, to reinstate all service members (active and reserve) who were discharged solely for refusing to receive the COVID-19 vaccine and request to be reinstated.

This EO would enable those service members reinstated to revert to their former rank and receive full back pay, benefits, bonus payments, and compensation. The EO would also allow service members, who provide a written and sworn attestation that they voluntarily left the service rather than receive the COVID-19 vaccine under the vaccine mandate, to return to service with no impact on their service status, rank, or pay.

Background:

- On August 24, 2021, then Secretary of Defense Lloyd Austin [mandated](#) that all service members receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - More than [8400 service members were discharged](#) from the military for a refusal to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.
 - The mandate was later [rescinded](#) on January 10th, 2023 as required by Section 525 of the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act.
- Following the rescission of the mandate, the Department of Defense [announced](#) that no individuals serving in the Armed Forces would be separated solely on the basis of their refusal to receive COVID-19 vaccination if they had sought an accommodation on religious, administrative, or medical grounds.
 - In addition, the Secretaries of the Military Departments had [updated](#) the record of such individuals to remove any adverse actions solely associated with the denials of such requests, including letters of reprimand.
 - However, the reinstatement memorandum did not include others who refused the vaccine.