

Gov. Noem Protects State Employees from Federal Vaccine Mandates



PIERRE, S.D. - Today, Governor Kristi Noem signed [Executive Order 2021-14](#), protecting state employees from President Biden’s federal vaccine mandates. She also released [this video](#) announcing her decision.

“South Dakota is fighting back against President Biden’s illegal vaccine mandates,” said **Governor Kristi Noem**. “Our state has many contracts with the federal government, and President Biden is attempting to use those contracts to force state employees to be vaccinated against their will. My executive order will protect their rights to medical and religious exemptions under any federal vaccine mandates. I am already talking with legislators about extending these protections to private employees through legislation as well.”

For the medical exemption, employees need a written statement from a physician stating that the COVID-19 vaccination is contraindicated for medical reasons.

For the religious exemption, a form will be made available by the Bureau of Human Resources that shall read in full, “I, [insert person’s full name], dissent and object to receiving a COVID-19 vaccine on religious grounds, which includes moral, ethical, and philosophical beliefs or principles.”

Due to established precedent, this Executive Order does not apply to service members with the South Dakota National Guard who must meet federal readiness responsibilities for deployment.

During the 2022 legislative session, Governor Noem will work with the legislature to make these protections for state employees permanent, and to extend similar health and religious liberty protections to employees of private businesses who adopted mandatory COVID-19 vaccination policies.

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