



Presidential Religious Liberty Commission

Public Comments Received in PDF

2025

The following are comments submitted in PDF to the Religious Liberty Commission through the public comment process.

From: Kelly [REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Urgent Plea! Religious Rights Being Taken Away In Next 2 Weeks With Mandate Of Vaccines For All Connecticut Residents

Date: Mon, 13 Apr 2026 14:24:48 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Regarding_Vaccine_Mandate_2.jpg

To The Religious Rights Committee Members,

I am asking for urgent prayers concerning the religious rights in the state of Connecticut. Governor Lamont is trying to get bills past and signed into law that will violate our religious rights of choice concerning vaccine mandates. Two bills, SB 450 and HB 5044, will be voted on and signed into law within the next two weeks. The bills will take away our right of choice to receive vaccines for all residents of the state of Connecticut for adults as well as children. They include taking away our religious rights to deny the vaccines as well. They also will not follow the CDC federal guidelines but will give the Department of Public Health Commissioner the right to choose what vaccines he/she deems necessary for all residents. These bills will also link the vaccines to insurance companies which means we could be penalized for refusal of any vaccines the commissioner deems necessary. These penalties could mean being dropped by our medical doctors and well as insurance carriers or higher premiums.

Residents have tried to submit testimony in person and online to no avail. The testimonies were cut short with not allowing everyone to testify, which has never been done before in our history of in person testimony. I tried submitting testimony in opposition to these bills but was unable to do so and when I called my senator, I was informed the site had crashed therefore I was unable to submit my opposition to the bills. I did, however, see when trying to submit my testimony those who were able to submit written testimony before the said "crash" there was not one testimony in favor of these bills. We are trying to get the word out and petitions signed but we need help and if there is anyway you could help or direct us we would be thankful and grateful..

Regardless of whether you can help us or not please keep us in your prayers as we, I am, praying for divine intervention.

I have attached one informational post regarding this issue.

I have been watching your meetings and thought I would ask for prayer and help in this issue. I thank you for your time and hope you have a blessed day.



Kate Prokop



Kate [REDACTED]



7h · 🌐



For the record the Joint Favorable Reports issued for SB450 and HB5044 do not reflect what actually happened.

What occurred during these hearings, in real time, is not what is being represented on paper.

Over 7,000 pieces of opposition testimony were submitted on these bills. I tracked them. I have records. Yet somehow, that number has now been reduced to just over 3,000 per bill.

So where did the rest go?

We had 7,261 total testimonies submitted on SB450 alone the day of the hearing. Nearly half have disappeared from the record. That is not a clerical error. That demands an explanation.

Why were they removed?
Who made that decision?
Under what authority?

Because what is being presented now is not an accurate reflection of public input and that matters.

It also matters that key opposition voices were either minimized or misrepresented. Testimony from our organization was not properly acknowledged. A member of our board was referenced only under a different role, omitting her affiliation entirely. Legal opposition tied directly to ongoing litigation was ignored. And 16,000 petition signatures submitted in opposition at the time now over 20,000 were not meaningfully reflected in the reports.

Meanwhile, names and positions appear in these reports that were not present or visible during the actual hearing process in any meaningful way.

This is not transparency. This is not an honest record.

And it creates the false impression that public input was evenly split when it was not.

On the day of the public hearing, approximately 96% of testimony submitted for SB450 was in opposition. That is the reality. I have preserved the submissions. I have the documentation. And I am now seeing links break and records become inaccessible.

To any legislator reviewing these reports: understand that these documents do not fully represent what your constituents submitted.

And to those responsible for compiling them we are asking, clearly and publicly, Where did the missing testimony go?



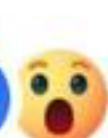
228



56



109



Most relevant ▼

Write a comment...

DOJ-RLC Comment-005694

From: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious discrimination of a public school teacher

Date: Wed, 08 Apr 2026 17:54:50 -0400

Importance: Normal

Good Evening,

I was encouraged to reach out to you and share my story by a good friend of mine who recently attended an RLC event in D.C. I am a former public school teacher who resigned from my district and am now facing a lawsuit and revocation of my teaching license for opposition to their transgender policy. My former employer([REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]) is also currently being investigated by the DOE due to their board policy on transgender students. Below is a brief summary of how I got to this point.

Thank you for all you do to stand up for our religious freedom.

God Bless you,

[REDACTED] PII

Last year toward the end of my sabbatical I met with the superintendent to discuss being released from my obligation to return from sabbatical. I cited my faith, school policy, and past district practice of permitting others to not return from sabbatical. I left my meeting with assurance that the recommendation would be for me to be released without obligation. A few weeks later I was told this would not be the case. At this time I drafted a letter of resignation that was sent to the school board and district administration. In my resignation letter I stated my objection to the board's transgender policy and asked about the process of repaying any expense that my sabbatical cost the district. After nearly 2 weeks I received no response and so I again reached out. I was notified that I was expected to return to the classroom in August and if I didn't I would be in violation of [REDACTED] school law. I again reiterated my desire to resign and the district moved to have me disciplined by the state and have my teaching license revoked. In addition, the board readied a vote for September indicating that I "abandoned my job." After these last two actions I informed the district's solicitor that I would be willing to return only if the district would agree to grant me an exemption from board policy 103.3 due to it being a violation of my sincerely held religious belief. The district denied my request and followed through with my termination. In addition I was served with a lawsuit seeking \$63,000 that the district sought to collect from me. After scrambling to find an attorney to represent me, I hired [REDACTED] who looked over the case and responded to their complaint which is still ongoing. He then filed an EEOC complaint, received notification of "right to sue", and drafted the attached complaint on my behalf. My legal expenses thus far have been 23 thousand dollars. I paid my attorney a 15k retainer at the beginning of this process and am scraping together (with the help of some generous people in my life) the remaining 8k in hope that I can file my complaint prior to what I am told is a mid-April deadline. I intend to see this through and hold [REDACTED] accountable for the evil that they are inflicting on children. Most school districts have no intention of reversing course on their gender policies, they will simply repackage them and make it harder for parents to find them. I am exploring ways to continue funding my pursuit of justice and trusting that God's work done in God's timing is never without God's resources.

[REDACTED] Policy 103.3

Students have the right to be addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to their consistently asserted gender identity. A court-ordered name or gender change is not required, and the student need not otherwise change their official records in order to be addressed by the name and pronoun that corresponds to the student's consistently asserted gender identity.

Appropriate school employees will privately ask known transgender or gender expansive students how they would like to be addressed in class, in correspondence to the student's home, and at conferences with the student's parent/guardian. That information will be included in the electronic student record system along with the student's legal name in order to inform teachers and staff of the name and pronoun by which to address the student. When appropriate or necessary, this information will be communicated directly with staff to facilitate the use of proper names and pronouns.

When communicating with known transgender or gender expansive students regarding particular issues such as conduct, discipline, grades, attendance or health, school employees will focus on the conduct or particular issues rather than making assumptions regarding the student's actual or perceived gender identity.

When communicating with parents/guardians of transgender or gender expansive students, school employees will refrain from the use of gender pronouns and refer to the student by name whenever practicable.

The District does not condone the intentional and/or persistent refusal to respect a student's consistently asserted gender identity, or inappropriate release of information regarding a student's transgender or gender expansive status. Such conduct shall be a violation of this Board Policy.

From: Mary [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Cc: [REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Open Letter to the Religious Liberty Commission

Date: Mon, 16 Mar 2026 11:42:18 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Open_Letter_to_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission_.pdf

Inline-Images: image.png; image(1).png



Address

Franklin Lakes, NJ 07417

Open Letter to the Religious Liberty Commission

March 16, 2026

Children's Health Defense welcomes the Religious Liberty Commission's (RLC) attention to the critically important intersections of religious freedom, healthcare, and education. We understand that the Commission's upcoming discussions include the growing conflicts between government healthcare mandates and the constitutional rights of families and individuals to exercise their faith. These issues are now at the forefront of important civil rights litigation across the country. The Commission's work is both exceptionally important and timely.

Employee Rights. We are grateful that the RLC took testimony from Hermione Susana last month, a New York City employee who lost her job after declining Covid-19 vaccination. CHD covered that testimony at our flagship publication [The Defender](#) and included an exclusive interview with Ms. Susana on [CHD TV](#) the morning after she gave her testimony to the RLC.

CHD is currently representing hundreds of New York City employees who, like Ms. Susanna, were terminated or forced out of their jobs after the City refused to honor their sincerely held religious beliefs. These workers include firefighters, police officers, teachers, sanitation workers, and other public servants who were called heroes for working on the front lines during the pandemic emergency, but were later dismissed after the emergency ended because they could not receive Covid-19 vaccines without violating their faith. We have had two important Second Circuit victories for these workers and continue to litigate. In the proposed class action *Tunnell v. City of New York*, No. 1:25-cv-01781 (E.D.N.Y.) and related lawsuits, discovery has revealed substantial evidence that the City adopted policies designed to categorically deny accommodation to certain religions while favoring others. We would love an opportunity to share some of these findings with the RLC.

Parental Rights. Another critical set of conflicts involves parents seeking to make medical decisions for their children consistent with their religious convictions. Across the country – and particularly in the four states that do not allow any form of religious accommodation – families are being forced to choose between adherence to their faith and their children's access to education, extracurricular activities, and other public programs.

Over the past year, CHD has worked closely with Congressman Greg Steube (R-Fl) to help publicly launch his legislation [The GRACE Act](#), which would protect religious exemption to vaccination in all 50 states. In addition, we commend Rep. Steube for his [letter to President Trump](#) requesting that the President consider issuing an executive order similar to the one addressing Covid vaccine mandates in schools across the nation. Efforts like this underscore the urgency of the work before this Commission and demonstrate that leaders across government are recognizing the need to restore and safeguard religious liberty in healthcare and education.

Importantly, Rep. Steube also recently [authored a letter to the Department of Justice](#) (DOJ) signed by thirteen members of Congress, recommending that the DOJ investigate – and potentially intervene in – two ongoing CHD cases involving religious liberty and vaccination. Those cases are:

1. *Doe v. Oceanside Union Free School District*, No. 25-cv-2304 (E.D.N.Y. 2025); and
2. *Children’s Health Defense v. McDonald*, No. 25-cv-06877 (E.D.N.Y. 2025).

These cases illustrate the extent of government overreach into parental rights to direct the care and religious upbringing of children. Because the issues raised in these cases have implications for families across the country, we respectfully encourage the Commission to consider them as part of its examination of religious liberty, healthcare, and education policy.

Two of the cases are described briefly below. We would welcome the opportunity to provide further information or assistance to the Commission as it evaluates these issues.

1. Doe v. Oceanside

Doe v. Oceanside represents a family’s fight to protect their daughter against the school district’s evisceration of their religious, medical, and parental rights. In 2019, the New York State Legislature repealed the long-standing religious exemption to school vaccination requirements, which had been in place for over fifty years. The change immediately forced tens of thousands of children out of school, unless their families were willing to violate sincerely held religious beliefs. Among them was 11-year-old Sarah Doe, whose parents faced an impossible choice: honor their faith or lose their daughter’s right to attend school and participate in sports and the community life she loved.

Sarah’s family tried homeschooling, but Sarah - described by one coach as a “once in a lifetime” athlete - suffered so severely from being deprived of access to sports and school that they gave in. Under [New York’s “catch-up” mandate](#), Sarah received [eighteen vaccines](#) over two months. Her health immediately collapsed. She developed kidney failure, intermittent paralysis, bleeding disorders, autoimmune conditions, and a severe anaphylactic rash that continues to this day despite daily medication.

Sarah is still very ill, years later, and still, her sacrifice was not enough. Midway through her sophomore year last year, Sarah was banned from the Oceanside Union Free School District — for missing just one dose of the hepatitis B vaccine. Seven doctors issued medical exemptions, warning that further vaccination could endanger her life. Even a walk-in clinic refused to vaccinate her, deeming her “medically ineligible.” Still, the District denied Sarah reasonable accommodation until Children’s Health Defense helped her seek legal redress. Judge Gary Brown, a Trump appointee, issued a preliminary injunction reinstating her to school last fall, pending resolution of the lawsuit.

The school district continues to aggressively challenge the ruling and has involved the New York State Department of Health in its effort to keep Sarah out of school. The irony is stark: New York law forbids the exclusion from school of children infected with hepatitis B, yet the state is trying to exclude Sarah for lacking a booster shot, when

she has severe contraindications, religious objections, and is uninfected. More ironic still, the district imposes no hepatitis B requirements on teachers or staff, undermining any notion of herd immunity.

This case highlights how incomprehensible things have become in New York. The State is not allowing children to follow their family's faith, their parents' advice, or even their doctors' strong recommendations. Bureaucratic zeal, euphemistically justified as "public health," has trampled conscience, science, and common sense.

Sarah's story isn't unique — it's a warning.

How many more children have been excluded, injured, or silenced simply because their faith no longer fits state policy?

2. *CHD v McDonald*

Children's Health Defense v. McDonald is the companion case to *Doe v. Oceanside*. While Sarah's lawsuit challenges the actions of her local school district, *McDonald* addresses the underlying state policy that created the conflict.

In *Children's Health Defense v. McDonald*, No. 2:25-cv-06877 (E.D.N.Y.), Sarah Doe—joined by seven other families and Children's Health Defense—challenges the constitutionality of the New York State Department of Health's enforcement of the state's school vaccination mandate after the Legislature repealed the religious exemption in 2019. The lawsuit seeks to enjoin the mandate insofar as it denies families any meaningful opportunity to obtain religious accommodation.

Recent Supreme Court precedent has clarified that policies that substantially interfere with parents' rights to guide the religious upbringing of their children are subject to strict scrutiny under the First and Fourteenth Amendments. Under that standard, New York's vaccination regime poses serious constitutional concerns.

The State's mandate is *not* generally applicable. It permits a range of exceptions and discretionary exemptions—including medical exemptions, exemptions for students aged eighteen and above, and for staff and faculty—while categorically denying accommodation to families whose objections are rooted in religion. Hundreds of thousands of teachers and other school employees remain unvaccinated without being excluded from the classroom. These inconsistencies reveal that the policy does not operate as a narrowly tailored public health measure, but instead places the burden of enforcement primarily on parents seeking to raise children in accordance with their faith.

New York is also a stark outlier. Forty-six states continue to provide accommodation to families who oppose school vaccination requirements on religious grounds. These states have long balanced public health goals with constitutional protections for religious liberty and parental rights.

Expert declarations and publicly available CDC data submitted in *McDonald* further demonstrate that the handful of states that repealed religious accommodation—including New York—have not achieved better public health outcomes than states that continue to allow such exemptions, including neighboring states with overlapping populations.

Conclusion. These companion cases and others raise a fundamental question central to the Commission's work: whether public health policies may be implemented in ways that protect community health *without* forcing families to abandon religious conviction.

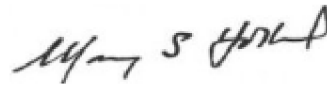
The experiences of the families Children's Health Defense is supporting raise important questions that fall squarely within the Commission's mandate.

We respectfully encourage the Religious Liberty Commission to examine:

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Children's Health Defense would welcome the opportunity to provide additional information, legal materials, expert analysis, or testimony to assist the Commission in its work.

Sincerely yours,



Mary S. Holland
President

cc:

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Health and Human Services
Harmeet Dhillon, Dept. of Justice, Assistant Attorney General
Senator Rand Paul
Senator Ron Johnson
Senator Ashley Moody
Senator Bernie Moreno
Representative Greg Steube
Dr. Ben Carson, American Cornerstone Institute

Mary S. Holland, Esq.
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Open Letter to the Religious Liberty Commission

March 16, 2026

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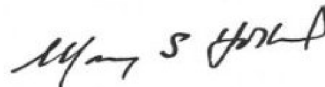
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Sincerely yours,



Mary S. Holland
President

cc:

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Health and Human Services
Harmeet Dhillon, Dept. of Justice, Assistant Attorney General
Senator Rand Paul
Senator Ron Johnson
Senator Ashley Moody
Senator Bernie Moreno
Representative Greg Steube
Dr. Ben Carson, American Cornerstone Institute

From: John [REDACTED] PII >

To: [REDACTED] PII

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Testimony From (Ret) NYPD Lieutenant for March 16th, 2026 Hearing

Date: Sun, 15 Mar 2026 16:33:46 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: 1_Open_Letter_to_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

To whom it may concern,

Please submit my written testimony into record for the March 16th hearing on Religious Liberty. My testimony will provide insight into how NYC and the NYPD handled religious accommodation requests during the COVID mandates.

Respectfully,

John D. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PII

Open Letter to the Religious Liberty Commission

Regarding Religious Discrimination Against Catholic Members of the NYPD During the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates

March 13, 2026

Members of the Commission,

My name is John D. Macari Jr., I was a Lieutenant in the New York City Police Department, and I respectfully submit this written testimony to document the religious discrimination that I personally witnessed and experienced during the COVID-19 vaccine mandates imposed by the City of New York.

I was born and raised in New York City to a disabled Vietnam combat veteran and a New York City school crossing guard. I was raised in the Roman Catholic faith, and my relationship with GOD has guided my entire life. My faith has always helped me distinguish right from wrong and has shaped both my personal life and my career in public service.

I had the great privilege of joining the New York City Police Department, where I served the people of New York for nearly eighteen years. Through dedication and hard work, I rose through the ranks to become a Lieutenant, and I intended to continue serving and growing in leadership positions within the department.

Throughout my career I maintained an exemplary record. I was consistently highly rated and respected by my supervisors, peers, subordinates, and the communities I served. I was never the subject of disciplinary action and dedicated my entire adult life to public service.

When the COVID-19 pandemic struck New York City, I reported to work every day while much of the city was shut down. Like thousands of other first responders, I served in whatever capacity was required whether maintaining order during periods of civil unrest or serving in my role as the Integrity Control Officer for the Facilities Management Division, where I was responsible for ensuring that laws, rules, and regulations were followed within the bureau.

During that time, I contracted COVID-19 in the line of duty, which the NYPD acknowledged as a line of duty injury. The illness developed into pneumonia and severely affected my health. I went from training five-minute rounds of boxing to struggling to walk up a flight of stairs.

Despite these challenges, I returned to work as soon as the NYPD medically permitted me to do so. For the first time in my career, I was placed on restricted duty due to the lingering effects of the illness.

Unfortunately, many of those effects remain with me today. I continue to suffer from diminished lung function, and I now experience bouts of depression and anxiety that I had never previously dealt with before contracting COVID-19 and enduring the discrimination that followed.

During my recovery the department surgeon ordered a series of heart and lung examinations. Both the surgeon and the nurse in the surgeon's office advised me that I should not receive the COVID-19 vaccine because my immune response would likely be severe high after already contracting the virus, which is when adverse side effects happen.

Around this time the City of New York began discussing a vaccine mandate for city employees.

As a Lieutenant familiar with Equal Employment Opportunity policy and federal employment law, I understood that employees have the right to request reasonable accommodations for sincerely held religious beliefs under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Despite this protection under federal law, my religious accommodation request was immediately denied, and I was ultimately given an ultimatum:

Take the vaccine or be terminated.

At that time, I had nearly eighteen years of honorable service and an exemplary record. Yet I was now facing the termination of my career for refusing to take a vaccine that conflicted with both medical advice and my sincerely held religious beliefs.

What followed was deeply disturbing.

Within the NYPD and city leadership there was open discussion that Catholic employees would not receive religious accommodations. Public Statements from both the Pope and Cardinal Timothy Dolan, who sits on this very committee were cited as justification for denying Catholics in NYC religious accommodations to not take the COVID-19 vaccine.

This reasoning was not only morally offensive it was legally incorrect.

Under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act, a sincerely held religious belief does not need to align with the official position of a religious institution, the Pope, a Cardinal, or any other religious authority. The law protects the conscience of the individual believer.

My conscience is where I believe God speaks directly to me. My faith teaches that I must listen to that voice above all else.

The Catholic Church itself recognizes the primacy of conscience. The **Fourth Lateran Council** affirmed this principle in unmistakable terms:

“Quidquid fit contra conscientiam aedificat ad gehennam.” - Whatever is done in opposition to conscience is damanation.

As a Catholic, this principle is clear: when conscience formed through faith, reflection and prayer, speaks to you it must be obeyed. As it is GOD's voice commanding it.

Besides my discussions with GOD, the New Testament teachings of Jesus Christ also clearly state I should not take a medical treatment when I am not sick.

"Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick."
Matthew 9:12

"They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick."
Mark 2:17

Having already contracted COVID-19 and recovered with extremely high natural antibodies, through GOD's healing, these teachings apply directly to my situation.

Furthermore, the City of New York demanding that I take the vaccine under threat of losing my career, was not only asking me to violate GOD's clear instructions, it was also demanding I denounce Jesus Christ by requiring I place the authority of government above the authority of GOD.

Not only are these actions discriminatory towards my faith but they are also a clear reversal from the very reason and beliefs this nation was founded upon.

As Thomas Jefferson stated in the Virginia Statute for Religious Freedom:

"Almighty God hath created the mind free and that all attempts to influence it by temporal punishments or burdens are a departure from the plan of the Holy Author of our religion."

This supports the idea that government coercion in matters of faith is illegitimate.

The Founders understood that rights come from GOD, not government. A nation built on that principle should never demand that its citizens place the authority of the state above the authority of their faith.

As the philosopher John Locke, whose writings helped shape the foundations of American liberty, warned:

"Wherever law ends, tyranny begins."

I complained to the EEOC who refused investigate. I complained to the NYS Human Rights division who stated that because the NYPD approved some accommodation requests it proves they did not discriminate, which is in fact the very definition of discrimination.

I cited numerous laws and policy from the NYPD, EEOC and NYS Human Rights law that were violated by both the NYPD and the NYC and my allegations were not even investigated, they

were dismissed without justification. The very Federal & State government offices set up to protect religious liberty furthered the discrimination I experienced from NYC and the NYPD.

When government ignores the protections of law particularly protections for religious liberty it crosses the line from lawful authority into tyranny.

All while the hypocrisy within the NYPD was evident.

Officers requesting religious accommodations to maintain a beard cited Leviticus 19:27 which states “You shall not shave around the sides of your head, nor shall you disfigure the edges of your beard.” And their religious accommodation requests were approved one hundred percent of the time.

Yet Catholic officers requesting religious accommodations related to the COVID-19 vaccine were overwhelmingly denied. Approval rates were reported to be less than sixteen percent.

For reference the overall approval rate for those requesting a religious accommodation request not related to the COVID 19 vaccine are approved 96% of the time.

The process itself was arbitrary and capricious. Entire detective squads submitted word for word identical religious accommodation requests differing only in name and tax number. Few were approved while the majority were denied without meaningful explanation.

For many officers, including myself, the message was unmistakable:

Our faith would not be respected.

We were forced to choose between our faith and our careers.

I chose my faith.

As a result, I was forced to leave my career in the profession I loved and to which I had dedicated my entire adult life.

I would have welcomed the opportunity to personally testify before this Commission. My efforts to defend religious liberty during and after this time have caused me irreparable professional harm, as well as significant physical and emotional distress.

Despite that reality, I would have willingly dedicated more of my life, my money, and sacred honor to appear before this body.

However, at the time of these proceedings I had already committed to be elsewhere with my children. They too have suffered the consequences of this discrimination, the loss of financial security, the upheaval of our lives, and the emotional toll of an abrupt change in lifestyle.

I am unwilling to make them sacrifice anymore. This fight has already taken enough from my family.

Should this hearing proceed after this coming week, I will gladly come to Washington, DC and testify before the committee as well as answer any and every question from the committee under Oath.

Across the United States, thousands of police officers, firefighters, teachers, healthcare workers, military members, and other public servants were terminated, forced to resign, or forced into early retirement because they refused to violate their religious beliefs.

The Founders of this nation understood that religious liberty is not a privilege granted by government but a natural right from GOD.

As James Madison, wrote:

“The Religion then of every man must be left to the conviction and conscience of every man.”

If this Commission truly exists to defend religious liberty, then acknowledging injustice is not enough.

Those who were terminated, forced to resign, or forced into early retirement because of the COVID-19 vaccine mandates must be:

- Reinstated to their positions
- Restored their seniority and pension credit
- Compensated for lost wages and benefits
- Made financially whole for the damage done to their careers

If this Commission spends months deliberating and nothing is done to correct these injustices, history will remember that as well.

And those who sit on this Commission will stand alongside the same officials who engaged in and defended these discriminatory actions.

The defense of religious liberty is not measured by the words spoken in hearings but by the justice delivered afterward. If Americans can be punished for following their faith without consequence, then the freedom our founders fought and died to secure is already lost.

Respectfully submitted,

John D. Macari Jr.

From: Diane [REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Thousands of workers punished for demanding our religious and personal convictions be respected during Covid-19 "vaccine mandate" are still suffering, FIVE YEARS ON!

Date: Sat, 14 Mar 2026 17:58:36 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: RLC_open_letter_--

_NYC_Employees_Fired_For_Not_Getting_Covid_Shot_Still_Barred_From_Work.pdf

Dear Members of the U.S. Religious Liberty Commission,

Many of the authoritarians who in 2021 imposed overreaching vaccine mandates and "vaccine passports" to coerce the entire nation into consuming an Emergency Use Authorization medical product known as the Covid-19 vaccine, have been engaged in a years long project to rewrite what happened during Covid times so that they will not have to be held to account nor investigated for their actions during that dark period. They want you to believe that some bad things happened, but that it is over, and anyone harmed by the draconian mandates and coercions at the time has moved on, or is back to work, and we "defeated Covid" and all is well. I write to you today to say do not let the "experts" and the "health leaders" mislead you--for there are thousands of unvaccinated workers in NYC alone whose torture at the hands of these abusive opportunist tyrants continues. I am a 57 year old New Yorker, a woman born and raised in [REDACTED], NY, who had a career of service with two NYC agencies--our public hospitals and our public schools, until in 2021, when I was locked out of my job at NYC Schools for refusing to take a Covid shot. As part of my punishment for refusing, the Mayor and his minions, in cooperation with other agencies, subjected me to the following:

- a) I was put on involuntary unpaid leave
- b) I was forbidden to earn income anywhere else while on the "unpaid leave," causing me to run short of money and spend my

retirement savings to keep a roof over my head; by February 2023, I had to give up my [REDACTED] apartment and move out of NY

c) The same City that claimed it was doing all this for the "public health" cancelled my health coverage, forcing me to apply for NYS Medicaid

d) The same State that claimed that we were "all in this together" denied me Unemployment Insurance benefits even though they had ample evidence that my leave was involuntary and non-disciplinary, and even though the City had previously promised that the leave "would be involuntary and non-disciplinary for purposes of Unemployment Insurance benefits."

e) The same City union that claimed to protect me allowed NYC Schools to deny me due process and allowed it to replace me while I was on leave, then lie to keep me from finding out

f) The City of NY secretly put a code called a "Problem Code" on my employment file that is the same code put on the file of an employee who commits a crime against a child, as retaliation for me not taking a Covid shot and to damage my ability to get future employment

The United States has laws and policies in place that are supposed to protect older workers from job discrimination and tactics used against older workers. Despite this, when the City of NY (and other cities) used the vaccine mandate to perpetrate mass firings of older workers (who tend to have strong convictions and lines we will not cross), the City was allowed to get away with these mass firings. We the unvaccinated workers were not even given the due process protections that so many politicians are adamant be given to criminals.

For all the talk, particularly in the Democratic Party, about the importance of protecting and supporting women, when the NYC Schools, an agency whose staff is historically majority female, mass fired females who objected to taking a Covid shot, virtually no one came to our defense. While I know the mistreatment of American women will anger all members of the RLC, here I particularly want to

appeal to its female members including but not limited to Ms. Alveda King and Ms. Kristen Waggoner. The U.S. regularly condemns nations who harm their women. We must hold accountable the Covid authoritarians who did harm to our own women.

And this is how a woman who had worked all her life since age 18, who came from a humble Catholic background in Queens, who worked her way through college and grad school and helped countless people as a social worker, had everything I had worked for over two decades taken from me, just for saying no to a shot that would have gone against my beliefs; and now in 2026 STILL, *not a single genuine effort has been made to give back what has been taken.*

The Covid vax mandates were not a "public health" policy; the establishment hucksters and arrivistes of New York, including but not limited to Governor Kathy Hochul and Mayors De Blasio and Adams and the entirety of their administrations quickly realized how they could use Covid illness to justify mass punishments and firings of good and moral workers--a necessary step to immediately stop paying us and relieve themselves of their pension obligations to us; and then replacing us with maleable, lower paid workers who would toe the line.

I refer you to the open letter recently sent to the Religious Liberty Commission by my friend and colleague, Michael Kane, who besides being a great New Yorker who stood up to the mandates, was also a marvelous teacher who the NYC Schools preferred to lose rather than to respect his right to turn down a Covid shot (it so happens that my niece turned out to be Mike's student and she said he was one of her best teachers).

Please note that the former Health Commissioner of NYC, Dr. Ashwin Vasan, told the Washington Post's Dan Diamond in a recorded interview on August 11, 2022 that the Covid emergency

was over and we did not need a vaccine mandate anymore (The video is easily searchable). Yet Vasan waited until February 2023 to end the vax mandate--basically facilitating not only the permanent firing of thousands more unvaccinated NY workers, but also facilitating forcing hundreds of thousands more NYers to take a Covid shot they may not have wanted nor needed to take. This was a horrific violation of that Health Commissioner's oath to care for the health of NYers. The question remains, who did he do it for? What was he offered to violate his commitment to the people he served. We the workers who lost everything because of this mandate are still waiting for answers.

A great nation cannot allow, can never again allow, for opportunists and "experts" to trample rights in the name of a "health" emergency. For when we allow this, we will coincidentally subjected to an "emergency" that makes a bunch of "experts" and "leaders" rich beyond their wildest dreams while it impoverishes anyone who pushes back.

Sincerely,

Diane [REDACTED]

N.B. See Mike Kane's letter attached.

Open Letter to the Religious Liberty Commission from Teachers for Choice

NYC Employees Fired For Not Getting Covid Shot Still Barred From Work Even Today in 2026



The *Religious Liberty Commission* (RLC) is meeting on Monday, March 16 in Washington DC focusing on religious freedom and healthcare. Below is an open letter I have submitted to the RLC in an attempt to draw attention to the continuing plight of NYC unvaccinated workers of faith. I sent the below open letter to **PII** on March 13, 2026. TEACHERS FOR CHOICE recommends everyone who has been impacted should consider sending their own account to the RLC as well.

My name is Michael Kane, I am the Director of Advocacy at *Children's Health Defense* and the founder of *Teachers for Choice*. I helped organize a peaceful worker resistance movement in NYC fighting against Covid vaccine mandates that included teachers, fire fighters, cops, sanitation workers and more. We have organized ourselves under names that include *NY Workers for Choice*, *Teachers for Choice*, *Bravest for Choice*, *Strongest for Choice*, and *Cops 4 Freedom* (among others). *Children's Health Defense* has been a major supporter of this effort, helping to fund and back multiple ongoing lawsuits related to the denial of our religious accommodations.

In September of 2021, I submitted a religious exemption to vaccination as a special education teacher with over 14 years on the job in NYC. The next month my exemption was denied and I was removed from my job for refusing to get the Covid shot. Ultimately in February of 2022, I was officially fired by the City and have been suing in the courts ever since (continuing still today nearly 5 years later). Even after a court ordered that I return to my position as a teacher I was never actually allowed to return to my job.

My story is comparable to that of **Hermione Susana** who did an outstanding job telling her story when she testified to the RLC just last month.

While this travesty of justice was - and is - horrible enough to warrant a letter to the RLC, this is not why I am writing to you today. Instead, I would like to call your attention to an extremely cruel "bait-and-switch" policy that NYC recently pretended to implement for fired unvaccinated workers, toying with the emotions of a group of

people who have already been devastated by discrimination and denial of religious freedom.

In November of 2025, NYC's former Mayor Eric Adams implemented a "right to return" policy for fired unvaccinated workers like myself. Believe it or not, NYC is still discriminating against unvaccinated workers by often requiring us to sign a legal waiver before returning to work for the City. Once signed, the waiver means you no longer have the right to sue NYC over any illegal implementation of their vaccine mandate. This is strange because if the City has truly done nothing wrong, as they claim, why should any unvaccinated worker need to sign away their legal rights?

Thankfully - *finally!* - this new "right to return" rule-change from the mayor was set to end this nonsensical policy. NPR's print publication in NYC, *Gothamist*, [reported on this](#) where I was quoted in the article.

When then-mayor Eric Adams started the "right to return" process he set up a rule change meeting which was heard by DCAS; this agency is essentially NYC's H.R. department. That meeting was held [virtually via Zoom on November 19, 2025](#). After that meeting the rule was supposed to be sent to the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in Albany, NY, for final approval before implementation.

However, Mayor Eric Adams never sent the rule change to the CSC, and the current NYC Mayor Zohran Mamdani is refusing to comment on the issue [when questioned by the press](#). All the new Mayor needs to do is refer this rule change to the CSC which would then allow hundreds if not thousands of unvaccinated workers to have a path back to their careers.

Today I know teachers with masters degrees driving Uber. I know fire fighters and kitchen workers who were made homeless by the illegal implementation of vaccine mandates that denied religious accommodation in unconstitutional fashion.

Here we are some 5 years after the Covid crisis and people are still being kept out of work for their sincerely held religious convictions dealing with vaccines. President Trump has done the right thing for military workers by issuing an Executive Order to reinstate unvaccinated soldiers with backpay. While that process has not been without its own problems, it is light years better than the insanity we are facing in NYC.

Recommendations to the RLC

I implore the commission to help us by doing the following:

- 1. First and foremost: Please give an immediate recommendation to the Trump Administration that they engage Mayor Zohran Mamdani to convince him to submit the above mentioned rule-change to the CSC in Albany so unvaccinated New Yorkers of faith will receive at least minimal relief to be allowed to return to work for NYC. This is a very small ask and “small lift” for the mayor,**
2. Shine a light on this horrifying injustice and include it in in your final report to President Trump and the Executive Branch,
3. Engage those of us impacted to come up with additional solutions to recommend as well,
4. I would also love to assist in getting impacted individuals to testify to you about how this impossible situation is destroying their lives in New York.

If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Thank you for your time and consideration to this critical matter, and may God bless and guide you in your service with the RLC and always.

From: Margherita [REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Ongoing Religious Persecution

Date: Sat, 14 Mar 2026 12:54:20 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: RLC_COMMISION_copy.pdf

March 13,2026

RE: The Ongoing Religious Persecution

Open Letter to the Religious Commitee Commision

My name is Margherita [REDACTED] one of the members of Teachers For Choice, a group organized by teacher professionals that formed in 2021 to oppose the covid-19 vaccine. Other organizations the formed at that time are Bravest For Choice(FDNY), and New York City Sanitation (NYCS) and more. These groups were implemented to try to defeat the mandates that stole our careers, livlihood, medical benefits, Contributions to retirement funds,social security, dignity and alot more harm.

I was a New York City exemplary teacher from 2004-2022. On February 18, 2022 I was terminated from my job without due process and my religious exemptions were denied three times. I was denied my sincerly held religious beliefs. My 1st amendment Rights (Free exercise of religion)were just taken away because the Pope agreed to being Covid-19 vaccinated. The Pope isn't God he is a human being like everyone else so I really don't follow what he says. I believe God is housed in my body and heart and my heart was telling me not to take covid-19 vaccine.

I am writing to the Religious Committee Commision today to ask you to evaluate this persecution of me and some many others of those who refused Covid-19 vaccine on religious grounds(who were denied religious rights three times) which is ongoing. I am a terminated teacher who still has not been reinstated to my job. Mayor Adams made a announcement in Novemnner 2025 that he would bring back terminated workers by reinstating us but this never came too pass. I ask you to please consider fighting for us because being denied your religious beliefs is a form of tyranny which should not exist in our world today.

During a hearing commitee at NY City Counsel a bravest for choice member recited a the following from a serenity Prayer on the floor of NYC council which remains with me until this day. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change; Courage to change the things I can; And the wisdom to know the difference".

I want to thank you for considering my letter and this urgent matter. May God be with you.

Sincerley,
Margherita [REDACTED]

From: Kara [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: Personal Story of Religious Exemption Denials in Employment and Schooling

Date: Fri, 13 Mar 2026 11:45:24 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: RLC_USDOJ.pdf

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I learned from a health freedom organization I subscribe to that the Religious Liberty Commission, as part of the U.S. Department of Justice, will be examining the question of religious liberty in the context of healthcare at its March 16th meeting.

I was told that your committee is accepting stories related to this topic by way of gathering evidence of the violation of religious liberty.

I offer my personal story of having my requests for religious exemption from vaccine mandates denied in employment and education. My story is attached as a PDF document.

I am emailing my story again, closer to your meeting date, in order to include my story in your testimony records. I do not wish to speak in person at the committee hearings.

Thank you for your work.

- Kara [REDACTED]

Address [REDACTED]

To: Religious Liberty Commission, U.S. Department of Justice

From: Kara [REDACTED], MS, OTR/L

February 23, 2026

Subject: My Story of Religious Exemption Denials in Employment and Schooling

Dear Religious Liberty Commission,

I learned from a health freedom organization that the Religious Liberty Commission, as part of the U.S. Department of Justice, will be examining the question of religious liberty in the context of healthcare at its March meeting. I was told that your committee is accepting stories related to this topic by way of gathering evidence of the violation of religious liberty. I offer my personal story below. I do not wish to speak in person at the committee hearings.

In the fall of 2021, I lost my job due to the Covid-19 vaccine mandates sweeping the country. Before that, in June of 2019, my son lost his right to a free and appropriate education in New York State when the state legislature rescinded the right to claim religious exemptions from school vaccine mandates. My family's life in the last seven years has been profoundly affected by the state trampling on my genuine and sincere religious beliefs regarding health care choices for myself and my son. I hope that my personal story below illustrates the significant harm that has been done to members of our society when the state takes away the right to religious accommodation in healthcare situations.

In March of 2020, I was the first person in my New York City school building where I worked as a full-time occupational therapist to contract a confirmed case of the Covid-19 illness. Luckily, I recovered at home without complications. I developed natural immunity, as it was historically understood. My county department of health called me to take a survey about my symptoms and asked how I was doing. When schools went remote, I continued to provide OT services to my special education students online. When staff and students returned to our school building months later to provide in-person classroom instruction and special education related services, I was there with them.

In late August 2021, I remember sitting in my car waiting to pick my son up from his summer job, when I heard on the radio then Mayor Bill de Blasio announce that all city employees would be required to get the Covid-19 vaccine by early October 2021 or lose their jobs. At that point in my career, I had accrued nine years of pensionable employment as a full-time occupational therapist with the New York City Department of Education. I was the mother of a 16-year-old high school student, living as a single parent in a home with a monthly mortgage. I felt dread hearing de Blasio's announcement since I already knew in my heart that taking the Covid-19 vaccines violated my religious beliefs. I knew that I would not take this vaccine. I was panicked, but also clear that I needed to abide by my religious convictions, come what may.

The New York City Department of Education, my employer, said that it would allow religious exemptions to the vaccine mandate, and had an online portal for applications. I hired a lawyer who was well versed in religious exemptions to help me submit my application, and had my church's Reverend write a letter of support for my position. But, like most other employees of the NYC DOE who applied for a religious exemption to the Covid-19 vaccine, my request was summarily denied for non-specific reasons. I attempted to appeal with the help of my lawyer, but the city claimed my appeal was submitted past the 24-hour appeal timeframe, though my lawyer and I denied this was true. I never got a response or an appeal.

As an NYC DOE employee, by default I was part of the United Federations of Teachers (UFT), which I hoped would defend employees' rights to a religious exemption to the Covid-19 vaccine mandates. However, the UFT sided with the city administration, and the UFT human resources representative I corresponded with numerous times did nothing to support me or any of us who were kicked out of our union jobs for refusing the Covid-19 vaccines.

Along with the thousands of other NYC DOE employees who were forced out of work in October 2021 for refusing the Covid-19 vaccines, I was offered the choice to keep my health insurance for the school year by taking an unpaid "leave of absence." I decided to sign up for the one-year "leave" option, even though I had heard warnings from others in my situation that by doing so I might jeopardize my right to sue the city. I was scared and overwhelmed, and I hoped that the incoming new NYC mayor, Eric Adams, would keep his campaign promise to drop the Covid-19 vaccine mandates. He didn't. Mayor Adams maintained the Covid-19 vaccine mandate until February 2023.

After being forced out of my job in October 2021, I had to rely on my ex-husband and my parents for income to pay my mortgage and pay for essentials, while working small jobs like babysitting to help cover a fraction of my expenses. The one-year "leave" option that allowed me to keep my health insurance stipulated that I was forbidden from taking "gainful employment" for that one-year period. In addition, those of us who were forced out of work in NYC were also prohibited by the state from applying for unemployment insurance! It was a desperate time, and I'm grateful I had family who were sympathetic and willing to help me out financially. I eventually found work elsewhere, with a reduced annual income. I lost three years of salary increases and pension accruals which, as a single person, I am relying on for my future retirement.

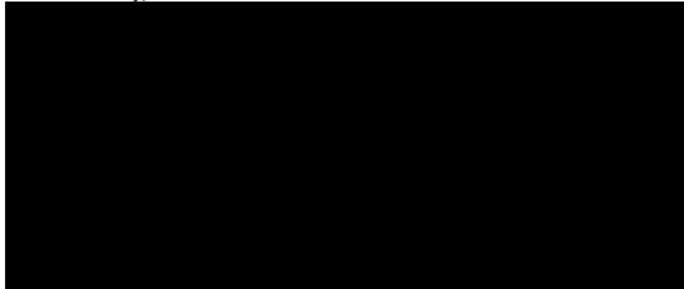
This was not my first rodeo with the state denying my family the right to a religious exemption from vaccine mandates. My son had a religious exemption from New York State's school vaccine mandates ever since he was in kindergarten. Then, in June, 2019, when my son was in ninth grade at our local public high school, the NY State Legislature voted to rescind the 50-year-old religious exemption statute in New York. They did this despite the fact that less than 1% of the state's school population had a religious exemption at that time, meaning my son and the other unvaccinated children were never a threat to the 95% or so of vaccinated children the health department claimed were required in order to maintain "herd immunity."

On that day in June, 2019, the NY State Legislature denied the validity of religious beliefs in health care decisions and kicked 26,000 children out of the school system, my son being one of them. My family was lucky: rather than violate our religious convictions and give my son all the "catch-up" vaccines he had never had but was suddenly required to get within six weeks in order to attend school in September, we were able to send him to a private high school across the border in New Jersey where state law and his new school permitted his religious exemption. I had friends in the same situation who moved out of state instead, and other friends who began to home school. My son graduated from high school in New Jersey, and is now about to graduate from a prestigious university which has continued to honor his religious exemption. For this we are deeply grateful.

Since 2019, I have had the life-altering experience of the government denying my fundamental right to exercise my religious beliefs in regards to health care decisions for myself and my child. I have come to the conclusion that the state has become an enemy of religious liberty. I hope that your Religious Liberty Commission will restore the right of individuals and parents to exercise their right to religious accommodations in health care decisions, and specifically to always allow religious exemptions from medical mandates, whether in employment for adults or education for children.

Thank you for your work to protect religious liberty.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

PII

From [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty in Social Services - Story/Statement Proposal

Date: Sat, 28 Feb 2026 17:57:36 -0500

Importance: Normal

To whom it may concern,

Thank you for the invitation to the hearing by the Presidential Religious Liberty Commission to look at religious liberty in healthcare and social services. I would like to submit and propose my story for inclusion if you feel it merits consideration. Thank you.

My name is Dr. [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]. I'm a [REDACTED], and have worked for 25 years with over 1,100 men, women, and youth who struggle with various forms of sexual and gender confusion, compulsions, and unwanted same-sex attractions. Over the years I have been picketed, threatened, harassed, and stalked. In 2022 I published a new book to help youth who are struggling.

Shortly thereafter, a false accusation of [REDACTED] was made against me by a [REDACTED] who was angry about compensation and expressed a desire to open a competing agency. My attorney assured me that without evidence it would quickly disappear. Ironically, this employee had already been [REDACTED] for [REDACTED] with fellow employees, then sued for [REDACTED] in his office. However, the Licensing Director picked up the complaint anyway and asked me to submit to a [REDACTED] evaluation, which would cost between \$5,000 and \$10,000.

I agreed to comply, but a week before the evaluation was to be administered, my attorney called to indicate a new problem. He had private, off-record conversations with the Director and told me, *"I have never seen this. She despises you and your work, and wants to publicly punish you. She said you are a 'fake' and a 'fraud,' and your values harm the LGBTQ community. She appears quite hostile toward you. Do you want to proceed with all this?"*

I consulted with a colleague in my state who had faced a similar situation. He told me that submitting to the Director's investigation was the worst decision of his life. Due to his Christian values, the Board generated 42 additional complaints and he ultimately retired his license under duress, as the Board publicly released personal information unrelated to the allegations. After consulting with my executive team, and after prayer with my wife, we made the difficult decision to retire my license.

However, the Licensing Director rejected my retirement and instead revoked my license under duress. They framed the matter in a way that suggested multiple complaints of [REDACTED] had been reported, creating the appearance of guilt without any investigation.

During this period, our executive leadership conducted an internal review. They spoke to every current and former employee available to them and produced a formal report. That review found zero evidence of unprofessional conduct of any kind. Additionally, they failed to find any substantive client complaints over the past 23 years.

Unfortunately, this was not the end of the matter. The Licensing Director secretly passed the accusation documents to an antagonistic psychologist who brought the information to my [REDACTED]. What followed was a wave of alarm and misinformation that generated a type of internal witch hunt. Families began threatening to leave the church if I was not removed. Shortly thereafter, the original instigator contacted the church with additional slander. To make matters worse, a church volunteer started a rumor implying [REDACTED]. In an effort to avoid publicity and division, the church leadership asked our family to leave.

Gay journalists began writing stories, harassing and contacting our staff, and asserting that our clinic must be engaged in harmful conversion practices. At one point I was the lead story on [REDACTED]. My name has been aggressively smeared online, and I continue to experience harassment connected to the original false accusation.

After these events, an independent external investigation occurred. That investigation concluded there was no evidence to substantiate the allegations. In fact, they ascertained incredible bias and discriminatory behavior by the Director. In an effort to further demonstrate my innocence, I voluntarily submitted to a polygraph examination and a psychosexual assessment. The results of both supported my innocence and found no evidence of deviance or misconduct.

Since this has transpired, I have learned of a third counseling center that was reportedly threatened by the Licensing Director and compelled to remove all references to Christian counseling from its website and materials.

The cultural and professional bias against Christian therapists who work with individuals seeking help for sexual confusion or compulsive behavior has been intense. Despite this, I am trusting God and remain committed to serving those who seek counsel consistent with their values. I have since established a nonprofit ministry that allows me to continue speaking, teaching, and supporting individuals and families navigating these complex issues.

I remain confident that truth, integrity, and faithful perseverance matter. Thank you for taking the time to listen.

PII



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From: Jessie [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal testimony of a nurse: Denial of religious accommodation for the Covid vaccine mandate in Maine

Date: Sun, 15 Feb 2026 22:48:27 -0500

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Covenant_Religious_Exemption_Request_(1).docx

Members of The Religious Liberty Commission:

Thank you for your willingness to examine religious freedom concerns within the US healthcare system, including denial of religious exemptions from vaccine mandates.

In anticipation of your upcoming March hearing, I am writing to share my testimony.

My name is Jessie [REDACTED]. I live in Maine, one of only five states that have unjustly eliminated religious and philosophical vaccine exemptions.

On October 29, 2021, I worked my last day at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center in Lewiston. I had been a registered nurse there for almost thirteen years, serving patients in our psychiatric and chemical dependency units. I was told I had "resigned" despite the fact that I never submitted a letter of resignation. What I had submitted was a letter requesting religious accommodation regarding Governor Janet Mills' Covid vaccine mandate for healthcare workers. This was denied. I have attached this letter to make my position clear.

I applied for unemployment on November 5th, just a few days later. Finally, on March 4th, 2022, over four months later, I received notice via email: "Anyone that was discharged or quit their job due to not getting the vaccine are denied".

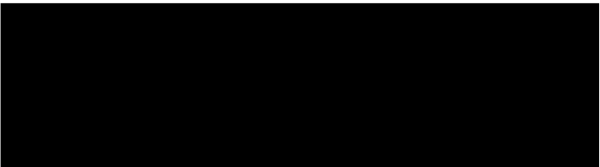
Soon after, I filed a discrimination complaint against St. Mary's with the EEOC. After conducting an investigation, they informed me, in August 2022, that they had found no evidence of discrimination. I considered a lawsuit at this point, but opted against it due to the financial and emotional cost. During this battle for personal justice, I watched the broader consequences unfold here in Maine. Nursing shortages got worse. On one day, in early January 2022, over 1,000 vaccinated healthcare workers had to miss work related to Covid illness or exposure. There was a breaking point when healthcare workers were forced to work shifts, even if they tested positive and had symptoms. I was unvaccinated, healthy, having acquired natural immunity, and able to work, yet not allowed in the hospital; while vaccinated, overtly ill, Covid-positive nurses were required to report for duty. It all felt like a really bad dream. Over four years later, it still shocks me to recount these events. I have not worked as a nurse since.

Finally, in September of 2023, the Covid vaccine mandate was lifted here in Maine, but the damage had been done. Some hospitals reached out to previously terminated healthcare workers, asking them to come back. I was not contacted. I continue to be ineligible for positions here in Maine due to required flu vaccines that I can no longer decline with a religious exemption.

I urge you to fight for the reinstatement of religious and philosophical vaccine exemptions here in Maine, as well as in California, New York, W. Virginia and Connecticut.

I have been thrilled to hear about the reinstatement of government workers and military members, with back pay. This is long overdue and well-deserved. I compel you to consider the same option for healthcare workers like me. It is long overdue and well-deserved.

Thank you for your time and consideration.



Covenant leadership:

My name is Jessie [REDACTED] I have been an RN at St. Mary's Regional Medical Center (SMRMC) for 13 years. In compliance with Gov. Mills' mandate, St. Mary's has directed me to be vaccinated with a COVID-19 vaccine or be considered "resigned" without a religious exemption option. Despite my dedication to St. Mary's, I cannot fulfill this mandate due to my sincerely held Christian convictions. On principle, I am writing to submit my beliefs, request religious accommodation and, hopefully, shine some light on this directive. From what I have observed, Covenant has lost sight of its merciless reality.

Jesus Christ calls me to study and obey his teachings, including submitting to governing authorities. However, when earthly rulers exceed their God-ordained roles and violate biblical principles, God must be obeyed, not "man". This is the cornerstone of my conscience, decision-making and actions. As a Catholic organization, it should be Covenant's as well. Instead of promoting Godly truths, Covenant has seemingly conformed to this decree without dissent. This is at least cowardly and dishonest, and at most self-serving and dastardly. If we are to endure under oppressive authorities, we must not do so in a way that give the impression that they are just and irreproachable. We must speak truth.

In this context, my objections to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate are as follows:

- Covenant's specific mandate deems me "resigned" as a result of my refusal to comply. This is not only insulting, it is patently dishonest. I am not resigning; Covenant is terminating me without advocacy. Exodus 20: 16
- This mandate aids and abets the relentless, corrupted, mainstream narrative that the experimental mRNA gene therapy, known as the Covid-19 vaccine, is the only viable, moral and socially-acceptable way to fight Covid-19. It ignores sound, divine truths concerning immunity and health- primarily the superiority of naturally-acquired immunity and the existence of safe and effective natural preventatives and treatments. This irresponsible campaign has ignored God's design, induced fear, suppressed life-saving information and demonized those who have spoken out in opposition.
- This mandate requires that officials actively identify, segregate and deny basic, God-given human rights to innocent (and healthy) people ("the unvaccinated"), deemed "dangerous" by the government. No trace of this familiar and evil ideology can be justified or allowed- not even for, "the greater good".
- All three of the currently available COVID-19 vaccines use cell lines originating from aborted babies in their manufacturing and/or testing. This mandate forces participation in a vaccine program dependent on the past and future continued slaughter of unborn children. Documentation of the use of murdered infants for pharmaceutical research is long, gruesome and largely hidden from the public. The Bible is clear: life begins at conception and the shedding of innocent blood is murder. Child sacrifice, even at the "altar" of life-saving pharmaceuticals, is abhorrent to the Lord. Jeremiah 1:5, Exodus 20:13, Leviticus 20: 1-5

- 818,042 adverse events following Covid-19 vaccination have been reported to the U.S HHS Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) alone, during the approximate 10-month period December 2020- October 15th 2021, including 17,128 deaths, stroke, heart failure, blood clots, brain disorders, convulsions, seizures, inflammations of brain & spinal cord, life-threatening allergic reactions, autoimmune diseases, arthritis, miscarriage, infertility, rapid-onset muscle weakness, deafness, blindness, narcolepsy and cataplexy. Many industry whistleblowers have come forward, revealing grossly under-reported death rates and suppression of hundreds of thousands of additional adverse events. The famous Lazarus report from Harvard Pilgrim Health Care in 2009 revealed that in general only 1% of adverse events from vaccines is being reported to VAERS. The implications of just this small sampling of available research and data is astounding. We are witnessing the most harmful and deadly mass vaccination program in world history. It is never ethical to mandate a treatment, known to harm and kill people in order to hypothetically save other people. We are all created in the image of God. All life has sanctity.

I will close with a quote from Martin Luther: “Unless I am convicted by Scripture and plain reason, I do not accept the authority of popes and councils, for they have contradicted each other- my conscience is captive to the Word of God. I cannot and will not recant anything, for to go against conscience is neither right nor safe. Here I stand, I cannot do otherwise. God help me. Amen.”

Jessie 

From: [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] My covid mandate story.

Date: Sun, 15 Feb 2026 20:10:46 -0500

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Notes_260212_215944_(1).pdf

My name is Curtis [REDACTED] and I was unjustly terminated over the mandate.

Sent from my Galaxy

Statement of Testimony:

My name is Curtis [REDACTED]. My life and values are rooted in my Christian faith, a foundation laid during my upbringing in [REDACTED], New York. Raised by my grandparents, I spent my youth within the church where my grandfather served as a minister. While my path diverged for a time, I experienced a profound spiritual conviction at the age of 32. This turning point led me to dedicate my life to Christ and eventually assume the role of Deacon at my grandfather's church.

In this capacity, I was entrusted with the stewardship of the house of worship. My responsibilities were practical and essential: building maintenance, climate control, preparing the sanctuary for services, and assisting the Pastor and Elders. To me, this was not merely labor; it was a high honor and a central pillar of my identity.

The Conflict of Conviction

Parallel to my ministry, I served the City of New York as an employee of the Department of Sanitation. In August 2021, I was informed that my employment was contingent upon receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. After deep prayer and reflection, I determined that I could not comply without violating my sincerely held religious beliefs.

I submitted a notarized request for a Religious Exemption (RE), grounded in three specific biblical principles:

- **The Sanctity of Conscience (Romans 14:22-23):** My faith dictates that to act against one's conscience is a sin.
- **The Theology of the Body (1 Corinthians 6:19-20):** I believe my body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, bought with a price, and I must honor God in how I care for it.
- **The Rejection of Fear (Matthew 10:28):** I am commanded to prioritize a reverent fear of God over the fear of worldly pressures or physical threats.

Administrative Scrutiny and Termination

During the exemption process, I was subjected to questioning that I found fundamentally intrusive and inconsistent with the historical Christian faith. Specifically, inquiries regarding the duration of my beliefs and my past medical history failed to account for the nature of spiritual transformation. Despite providing a pastoral letter and a ten-year history of tithing to demonstrate the sincerity of my faith, my request was denied.

In a move I found deeply inconsistent, the City terminated my employment while allowing other sectors of society to remain open without similar mandates. Furthermore, colleagues who attended my church received exemptions for the very arguments I had helped them articulate. Consequently, I was terminated and

forced to seek legal recourse through *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty v. NYC* and *Garvey v. NYC*.

The Impact of Displacement

The fallout of this termination was not merely financial; it was a systemic dismantling of my family's stability. Having purchased our first home—a "fixer-upper" we spent a year renovating. I worked hard throughout the winter renovating the entire house myself in order to save money and get my family in quickly. That is, my wife, my son and my daughter. I renovated and my wife spent countless hours coming through Facebook Marketplace and driving all of a Staten Island and New Jersey in order to find anything from furniture to light fixtures so we could stay on budget. She picked out wall colors, countertops, backsplash and anything else that would make our home "ours". She documented the renovation and took many before and after photos.

We were so proud.

Unfortunately, we were forced to sell it just twelve months later. The mandates prevented me from securing even basic retail employment in New York, necessitating a move to South Carolina.

The transition was marked by profound hardship:

- **Medical Crisis:** During the move, my 17-year-old son suffered two collapsed lungs. Due to my termination, our health insurance had been revoked without a grace period, forcing us to rely on emergency Medicaid during a life-threatening crisis.
- **Bereavement:** While my son was hospitalized, my grandfather passed away. I had to compose his eulogy and lead his service while facing unemployment and the loss of our home.
- **Family Separation:** To allow my son to graduate with his class, we had to leave him in New York. I have missed his 18th and 21st birthdays, and the physical separation has had a lasting negative impact on our family dynamic.
- **Community Loss:** My departure left my home church without its only Deacon, demonstrating that these mandates caused collateral damage to the religious community at large.

Needless to say, it was the most difficult time of my life.

Current Status and Conclusion

It is now 2026. Although the court ruled in our favor in the *Garvey* case in 2022—labeling the mandate "arbitrary and capricious"—the City continues to exhaust taxpayer resources to appeal that decision.

I have spent the last three years rebuilding my life from the bottom in South Carolina. I feel cheated of the pension I should have been allowed to earn. I share my story today to advocate for those who suffered under these policies. My

prayer is that this testimony serves as a catalyst for future protections, ensuring that no citizen is ever forced to choose between their livelihood and their deepest religious convictions.

My prayer is that all terminated city employees get back their positions, as well as, their compensation.

May God bless you all.

From: Society of Apostolic Church Ministries <[REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission

Date: Tue, 30 Sep 2025 20:15:11 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: BEN_CASPERSON_LETTER.docx; exhibits_09-30-2025_14-21-41-460.pdf

Attention: Ben Carson, Dan Patrick and the DOJ National Liberty Commission protecting and promoting religious liberty.

Dr. Carson, below is the church [REDACTED] talked to you about over the weekend at the meetings.

Please see the attachments below. Thank you.

Society of Apostolic Church Ministries (SACM)

Phone Number

Corporation sole, Bishop Dr. Elizabeth Gardner Elders, Pastor Fredric Gardner
Bishop William Garrett Evangelist Lee LaCoss Missionary Donna Mikusevich

September 30, 2025

Religious Freedom for all Americans
1100 H Street NW, Suite 840
Washington, D.C. 20005.

Attention: Dr. Ben Carson, Lieutenant Governor Patrick
National Faith Chairmen

As stated by President Trump, "The Founders envisioned a Nation in which religious people and institutions are free to practice their faith without fear of discrimination or hostility from the Government." Many legitimate churches use legal structure "corporation sole"¹ that allows their religious leader to manage all church assets and hold property on behalf of the church ensuring the property remains with the church when leadership changes.

I want to bring to your attention a situation of operations such as the Catholic, Anglican, LDS-Mormon, Episcopal, Presbyterian and many Non-Denomination churches. IRS is attempting to challenge unjust laws or practices attributed to churches holding corporation sole as their governance by claiming the church is a nominee. The use of the nominee theory against churches under these circumstances would lead to a situation where the IRS government agency is permitted to dictate to any church and/or religious organization how it operates and controls, thus attempting to change the laws of collection.

The IRS has begun to tread on the church and its assets for church leaders personal tax issues. This gets in a controversial area about government reach or overreach and where the line is when it comes to IRS's powers to collect back taxes on church leaders. This can complicate the church in many ways as they are infringing on religious freedoms. This begs the question; can the IRS collect on the religious organization and church's assets for the individuals tax debt? Accusations can lead to legal challenges, including lawsuits. This can drain resources and divert attention from the church's mission. The church may become preoccupied with addressing the accusations, which can distract from its core mission and outreach efforts and drain their assets, especially with small churches. Religious organizations present special considerations in nominee analysis. The First Amendment provides special protection, as it prohibits the government from such allegations.

The corporation sole of the church structure allows the individual to hold assets and liabilities separately from personal finances. As set forth in *County of San Luis Obispo v. Ashurst*, "there is a clear distinction between the corporation sole and the individual who happens to be the current office holder. The California court ruled that the real property is not subject to execution sale to satisfy the obligation of the judgment debtors. The issue is whether the assets of corporation sole are the personal assets of its titular

¹ Bryan A Garner, *A Dictionary of Modern Legal Usage*, 225 (2d ed. 1995) states: A corporation sole is "a continuous legal single personality attributed to successive holder of certain ecclesiastical positions. "Used as intended, corporation sole statutes enable religious leaders - typically bishops or parsons - to be incorporated for the purpose of conduct business and ensuring the continuation of ownership of property dedicated to the benefit of a legitimate religious organization. Internal Revenue Service Rec. Proc. 2004-27, 2004-1 C.B. 625, 626, 2004 WL 389673, at*1; The corporation sole is entirely the creature of positive Arizona state law under ARS 10-11901. See *Religious Organizations and the Law, Vol. 1, p. 1-74, 3-209,3-211; Act of Congress 62 Stat 355 (1948)*

head, thus subject to execution of his or her debt. The court concluded an unequivocal “NO!” The ownership of the assets of the church does not change: the individual who is the corporation sole for the church administers the assets of the church, but the assets of the church remain with the church.”

For the first time in church history of the United States of America through an almost unknown Quiet Title and Wrongful levy case, SACM v. IRS, has been judicated against the church as being the nominee of the Bishop’s tax issues. This is a challenge against the 1954 tax provision known as the Johnson Amendment, arguing that it infringed upon their First Amendment rights to freedom of speech and religion. This case went to the 9th Circuit Appeals after District Judge Humetewa, appointee of Obama gave summary judgement to the IRS even though SACM was the nonmoving party giving much evidence in dispute. The 9th Circuit, under two activist Justices, Obama appointee Rawlinson, and Biden appointee, Sanchez, affirming and President Trump’s appointee, Bumatay, a constitutionalist and conservative dissented. Bumatay dissenting comments are logical, compelling and chilling. (See Bumatay argument) The ruling in this case could result in IRS use of nominee theory seeking new legislation governing the IRS in its operations signaling how taxes are assessed, collected, and enforced affecting churches based upon the precedence of this case if it is not overruled or proven in error. This could open the door to an unprecedented assault on church and faith organizations that favor corporation sole for their governance.

This is a plea to you in great hopefulness that you consider the legitimate ecclesiastical Church Society, (SACM), that has been targeted by the IRS government agency asserting and declaring it is not legitimate but is the nominee of individuals, Elizabeth and Fredric Gardner, without any evidence. Indirectly saying SACM does not have the right to occupy or use property for church purposes. SACM introduced evidence that proved that SACM is not the Gardner’s nominee and should be answered by a jury – not judges. Justice Bumatay agrees. (Bumatay P.1, □1.)

This action is in regard to 2002-2004 Gardners unpaid income taxes the IRS claimed were sales when in truth funds donated to their church ministry. But because Bishop Dr. Gardner and Mr. Gardner’s signatures was on the account, the funds belonged to the Gardners. Twenty-five (25) years later IRS claimed it is able to confiscate the Church Society’s property and its bank accounts to satisfy this tax issue claiming that SACM is the nominee of the Gardners due to Bishop Gardner as corporation sole. The use of the nominee theory against churches under these circumstances would lead to a situation where the IRS government agency is permitted to dictate to any church and/or religious organization how it operates and controls, thus attempting to change the laws of tax collection.

This ruling would make all religious organizations use of corporation sole structure as precedence of nominee under law. The fact that every action of the corporation sole and especially the legality of corporation sole, is extremely relevant as to being the nominee. It would permit the IRS to determine whether any church or religious organization is legal fiction for federal tax purposes if it disagrees with the manner in which the church handles its financial affairs. It treads on uncertain constitutional territory. Under the Constitution, the government has no role in dictating the proper form of church governance. This would be a clear violation of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution and an unnecessary entanglement between church and state. It would make all religious organizations using the corporation sole structure a nominee under this view of law. (Bumatay, p.5, □1)

IRS claims that the 20-year ecclesiastical Society (SACM) does not meet the requirements to qualify as a tax-exempt organization which the government never proved and without any law to do so.
Summary of the Events:

In 2003, Bishop Elizabeth Gardner, being the corporation sole and pastor of Bethel Aram Ministries (BAM), the church name at that time, with existing Tax Exemption (ER-145) purchased real property with church congregation donation funds at Apache Knolls, Dewey, Az. The deed was filed by the previous owner, the Repans,(ER-147) and the church began weekly church services and midweek Bible Study. This First Amendment house church was built with two parts and two entrances: one part and entrance to the church and one part and entrance to the parsonage. According to law and IRS code, §107.1, a church can

provide a parsonage for its pastor for as long as they remain pastors and provide housing allowance paying for everything according to their canon enjoying the benefits.

During the following years the church changed its name according to the church status and circumstances at the time of the change and filed deeds accordingly. A religious entity should be able to change its name without fear that the new name could lead to its property being questioned by the government. The Church interactions, church doctrine and functions within all the name changes remained the same from its inception. The process of a church changing its name and filing a deed for recognition is typically referred to as a "name change" or "name amendment." This involves legal documentation to officially recognize the new name, requiring a filing with the appropriate state or local authorities. The deed change did not change hands to another church or entity, but for notice of name change only.

In 2006 SACM, a bona fide independent ecclesiastical Church Society was established with over 140 pastors, evangelists, bishops, apostles, and missionaries with bylaws and constitution by six (6) elected board of ordained elders. SACM members are ministers holding the office of corporation sole with the mission of establishing a relationship and covenant with like-minded kind faith and ministry. The Board of Elders of SACM agreed on how things were to be paid in the exercise of the canon of the Society. The elders elected Bishop Elizabeth Gardner as the corporation sole of SACM due to her ordination, religious doctorate education and pastoral experience. SACM Bishop Elizabeth Gardner corporation sole, registered in the State of Montana. SACM holds a three-day yearly conference of its apostolic members sometimes in hotels and the Society Headquarters, but when covid hit the conference was by zoom from the Society Headquarters at Apache Knolls Trail, Dewey, AZ (ER-46)

On September 12, 2012, thirteen years later Bethel Aram Ministries changed its name to Messiah House Fellowship (Ex-1). On December 17, 2012, the church, due to strong hailstorms, ordered a roof inspection. A new roof and other repairs were needed. Dr. Gardner, under the power of corporation sole and the bank's regulations, applied for the loan for the benefit of the church in their names for these repairs. During the application process the church continued using the property for church services under Dr. Gardner's pastoral and powers of corporation sole. Yavapai County continued to grant church exemption even during the time of it being in the name of the Gardners. On March 7, 2013, two months later when the loan application was completed, Bishop Dr. Gardner, due the different mission goal of the church, changed the church name to Church Restoration Ministries (CRM) and returned the property to the new changed name and filed a deed accordingly. (Ex-132) The church donations paid back the loan. Yavapai County Assessor and their official attorney, after reviewing the change of deed to CRM continued to grant a Full Church Exemption on the property up to 2019. (ER-149)

In 2013 SACM received a \$50,000 donation from Rev. Reynold Nelson of Grace Ministries that was a member of the SACM. This donation was part of the opening deposit of SACM's bank account. IRS claimed there is no record of it. This donation was part of the \$73,340.37 seized this by IRS. (ER-49, ER-165)

In 2019 after retirement of the pastors being 75 and 71, CRM donated the property to SACM to continue using the property for church purposes and headquarters for the Society. (ER-151) Yavapai County Assessor's and their official attorney after visiting the property and its facility, indicated that the property still remained for church purposes and granted full Church Affidavit for tax exemption to SACM. (ER-153)

On June 24, 2019, SACM opened a bank account titled under "Church Functions" with Joyce Essman, Administrator of SACM, as primary signer on the account, and Elder Fredric Gardner as Director of the Society. (ER-133) On January 1, 2020, Fredric Gardner resigned from the bank account and Ms. Essman remained.

On July 9, 2021, two years later, IRS recorded a Notice of Federal Tax Lien with seizure against SACM's real property without any notice. Then on August 10, 2021, levied \$73,340.37 from SACM's bank accounts stating, "SACM as the nominee of Fredric A. Gardner." (ER-162) The problem and difficulty is that Fredric Gardner was not on the bank account only Ms. Essman, but IRS prevailed in spite of it. (EX-2) On December 21, 2021, SACM filed a lawsuit for Quiet Title and Wrongful Levy with multiple material facts proving that SACM is a bona fide independent religious Society separate from the Gardners. The IRS filed for

summary judgment. In judging evidence at the summary judgment stage, the district court did not make credibility determinations or weigh conflicting evidence. Rather, it drew inferences in the light most favorable to the moving party, the IRS. This is wrong. SACM then filed an appeal to the 9th circuit and received oral argument with a decision of a 2-1 split. Justice Bumatay dissenting. Now SACM has to submit a Writ of Certiorari to the Supreme Court with a one in million chances to be heard.

The First Amendment values are plainly jeopardized when church property and assets are used to turn on and being attacked by using litigation and decisions in civil courts of controversies over religious doctrine and practice. Church property is to be protected by various legal frameworks that ensure its rights and ownership. The U.S. First Amendment provides a foundation for religious freedom which extends to property rights.

In your status and staunch belief in the Constitution and Religious Freedom for ALL Americans, our hope is you will be willing to help SACM in some way and protect it and other church organizations who have corporation sole for their governance. It is a clear violation of the rights guaranteed by the First Amendment of the Constitution and the unnecessary entanglement between church and state. Protecting churches using corporation sole would be a forever blessing to the churches and protection of their First Amendment rights.

Sincerely,

/s/ Bishop Dr. Elizabeth Gardner
SACM, Bishop Dr. Elizabeth Gardner,
corporation sole

FILED

*The Society of Apostolic Church Ministries Bishop, Elizabeth Gardner Corporation
Sole and Her Successors v. United States of America*, No. 24-1765
BUMATAY, Circuit Judge, dissenting:

JUL 24 2025

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

Summary judgment is appropriate only when there is no genuine dispute of material fact. That’s because “[c]redibility determinations, the weighing of the evidence, and the drawing of legitimate inferences from the facts are jury functions, not those of a judge, whether he is ruling on a motion for summary judgment or for a directed verdict.” *Anderson v. Liberty Lobby, Inc.*, 477 U.S. 242, 255 (1986). Here, the Society of Apostolic Church Ministries Bishop (“Society”) has introduced evidence that creates a triable question on whether it’s Elizabeth and Fredric Gardners’ nominee. On these facts, that question should be answered by a jury—not by judges.

The Society sued the United States after the IRS recorded a tax lien against its property in Arizona (“Apache Knolls”) and levied its bank account for taxes owed by the Gardners. Elizabeth Gardner is the Society’s bishop and its sole corporate officeholder. Fredric, her husband, is one of its elders. Apache Knolls is the Gardners’ primary residence and the meeting place of Messiah’s Remnant—a church fellowship—and the headquarters of the Society. The Society’s religious activity also occurs at Apache Knolls, according to the Society.

Both the Society and Messiah’s Remnant are organized as corporations sole. The IRS defines a “corporation sole” as “a corporate form authorized under certain

state laws to enable bona fide religious leaders to hold property and conduct business for the benefit of the religious entity.” Rev. Rul. 2004-27, 2004-1 C.B. 625, 626, 2004 WL 389673, at *1. Elizabeth Gardner most recently became a corporation sole of the Society under the laws of Montana. Under Montana law, the corporation sole has the power “to purchase, take, receive, lease, take by gift, devise, or bequest or otherwise acquire, own, hold, improve, use, and otherwise deal in and with real or personal property or any interest in real or personal property, wherever situated, provided that all property must be in trust for the use, purpose, and benefit of the religious denomination, society, or church for which and in whose behalf the corporation sole is organized.” Mont. Code § 35-3-205(4).

The Gardners owe the IRS taxes. To collect on those back taxes, the IRS set its eye on Apache Knolls and the Society’s bank account. The government’s theory is that those assets in fact belong not to the Society but to the Gardners personally. Legally speaking, the government argues that the Society is the Gardners’ *nominee* for both Apache Knolls and the bank account. While Arizona hasn’t expressly adopted a nominee theory of liability, in general, a nominee is a person or entity that holds “bare title” to an asset for the actual benefit of someone else—the true owner. *See Fourth Inv. LP v. United States*, 720 F.3d 1058, 1066 (9th Cir. 2013) (analyzing California law). But if the Gardners legitimately hold those assets for the benefit of the Society and its religious activity, no nominee status has been established. In

determining whether an entity is a taxpayer's nominee, we look to the totality of the circumstances. *Fourth Inv. LP*, 720 F.3d at 1070.

With this standard in mind, let's turn to the facts of this case.

1. First, turning to the Apache Knolls property. Bethel Aram Ministries, the corporate entity now known as Messiah's Remnant, acquired Apache Knolls in 2003. Since then, the deed chain shows that Apache Knolls changed hands several times over the years, mostly to other successor church entities but once to the Gardners personally before being transferred back again. Here is the deed chain:

Grantor	Grantee	Date recorded
Dennis M Repan and Olga Repan	Elizabeth A Gardner, A Corporation Sole of Bethel Aram Ministries	April 8, 2003
Elizabeth A Gardner, A Corporation Sole of Bethel Aram Ministries	Pastor, Elizabeth A Gardner A Corporation	September 12, 2012
Pastor, Elizabeth A Gardner A Corporation Sole of Messiah House Fellowship	Fredric A & Elizabeth A Gardner	December 17, 2012
Fredric A & Elizabeth A Gardner	Church Restoration Ministries, Elizabeth A Gardner, A Corporation	March 7, 2013
Church Restoration Ministries, Elizabeth A Gardner, A Corporation	Society of Apostolic Church Ministries, Bishop Elizabeth A Gardner, Corporation Sole	June 27, 2019

This deed history presents a triable issue of fact on whether Apache Knolls is held for the benefit of the Society or the Gardners personally. In favor of the

government are four undisputed facts. First, Elizabeth transferred the property to and from various corporation-sole entities she governs, including the Society, without consideration. Second, she transferred the property to herself and her husband one time. Third, they have enjoyed the benefits of the property by living on it for 20 years. And fourth, the Society pays for living expenses and various costs associated with homeownership, such as insurance and utilities.

While these facts might support a government verdict, a jury could reasonably draw inferences favoring the Society too. On the property transfers between different church entities, a jury could credit that some of the transfers were prompted by Messiah Remnant's name changes over the years—as Fredric said in his deposition. A religious entity should be able to change its name without fear that the new name could lead to its property being levied by the government. The majority concludes that the transfers do not primarily reflect name changes. But no facts point to this. As the deed chain shows, many of the transfers show only a name change: from *Bethel Aram Ministries* to *Messiah House Fellowship* to—after the transfer to the Gardners personally—*Church Restoration Ministries*. All three of these names refer to the same house church, which is now known, indeed, as Messiah's Remnant. Inference-drawing from these facts should be for a jury, rather than circuit judges.

On the transfer to the Gardners personally, a jury could find, again as explained by Fredric, that they transferred the property to their name at the direction of a bank to qualify the Society for a loan to fund a roof repair. In claiming it's irrelevant that the Apache Knolls property was transferred to the Gardners for the benefit of the Society, the majority makes a broad ruling that would make every corporation sole (and all religious organizations using the corporation sole structure) a nominee under its view of the law. To the majority, it doesn't matter *why* a property is transferred and "[m]ultiple transfers of the Apache Knolls property to different entities controlled by the Gardners for no consideration" is enough to establish nominee status. The majority cites no Arizona law for this exceedingly broad proposition of law. It also fails to acknowledge that Montana law expressly permits a corporation sole to transfer real property between church entities without consideration. *See* Mont. Code § 35-3-205(4). Most importantly, it misunderstands what the nominee inquiry is about—it's trying to determine who truly benefits from the asset. Of course the reason why a property is transferred is crucial to that inquiry. Under the majority's novel theory of law, every corporation sole now is in danger of being deemed a nominee of its officer.

The majority also holds it was sufficient that the "Society held bare legal title to the Apache Knolls property to benefit the Gardners." Again, this asks the wrong question. The right question is: Did the Apache Knolls property *also* benefit the

Society? If so, then it's not dispositive that the property also happened to benefit the Gardners. For example, if the Apache Knolls property was used for weekly religious services (as the Society contends), then it serves the Society even if the Gardners also personally benefitted. At least there's a triable issue of fact on that question and so summary judgment was inappropriate.

A jury too could find that the Gardners' living at the property and the Society's paying associated expenses is not evidence of a nominee relationship but is instead simply indicative of their roles in the church. The Gardners, after all, claim that they took vows of poverty and that they conduct church business from the property, which they call a parsonage. All sorts of religions provide dwelling places for their leaders and pay their expenses, including personal expenses. Would we be here today if the parsonage-dwelling, vow-of-poverty-taking bishop led a better-known church?

Permeating the government's theory of liability is the government's dislike of the way the Society runs its internal finances and how much control it cedes to Elizabeth Gardner. But this argument treads on dubious constitutional territory. The government has no role in dictating the proper form of church governance. *See, e.g., Our Lady of Guadalupe Sch. v. Morrissey-Berru*, 591 U.S. 732, 753 (2020).

Because there are triable issues of fact about whether Apache Knolls benefited the Society—rather than only the Gardners personally—this claim should have gone to the jury.

2. The bank account presents a triable question too. And here the case for remand should be even more uncontroversial: that's because the district court did not conduct nominee analysis *at all*. That's enough to send it back. The district court simply concluded that because the Society was the Gardners' nominee for Apache Knolls, then it must also be for the bank account. But that's wrong as a matter of logic and law.

Even if the Gardners were found to be the nominee of some of the Society's assets, that doesn't mean they are the nominee for all its assets. The Gardners could hold some of the Society's assets solely for their benefit but legitimately hold some assets for the benefit of the Society. That's why the nominee analysis proceeds asset-by-asset. The idea is to establish who the true owner of the asset is. If the government wanted to avoid this searching asset-by-asset inquiry, it could have charged the Society with being the Gardners' *alter ego*. See *Oxford Capital Corp. v. United States*, 211 F.3d 280, 284 (5th Cir. 2000) (explaining the difference between a nominee and an alter ego). That's a stronger claim, one that would essentially require the government to prove that the Society's corporate status is itself is a sham or fraud. If it succeeded, the IRS could reverse pierce the Society's corporate veil and get at its assets. See *id.* But the IRS does not argue that the Society is the Gardners' alter ego—only their nominee.

The majority suggests that this argument was forfeited. Reading the Society's complaint shows that this is wrong. The complaint makes clear that the Society's action was for both "quiet title" and "wrongful levy"—two separate actions. It shouldn't fall on the Society to ensure that the district court properly followed the law.

In any event, the majority concludes that the district court analyzed the bank account by mentioning in passing the Society's checking account in its discussion of a few *Towe* factors. That analysis ignores that most of the levied funds, including a sizeable donation, came not from the Society's checking account but from its money market account, which the district court did not analyze. To the extent it analyzed the Society's bank account at all, the district court collapsed the checking account and Apache Knolls into the same analysis and concluded that the Society is the Gardners' the nominee as a matter of law. The problem with this analysis is that it failed to proceed asset-by-asset. When district courts conduct the wrong analysis, we ask them to try again. Why not here?

What's more, the government surprisingly admitted at oral argument that it didn't know how the Society spent the money in the account. So the government doesn't even know if the Society used the account for bona fide religious purposes—or for the Gardners' personal expenses—yet it wants to immediately claim

ownership. That the government and the district court failed to do this analysis is troubling.

The record shows that a \$50,000 donation was made by a late donor to “be used for the ministry for any special need(s) and for you if need be—helping someone else.” The majority waves away too quickly the significance of this donation: a jury might reasonably infer from its deposit in the levied account that the account truly belongs to the Society, not to the Gardners. This is true even though Elizabeth Gardner had complete control over the donated funds—it is not uncommon that an organization’s top leader is the ultimate authority on how donations are spent.

The government may be right, but the Society deserves a jury trial—not judges sitting as their overseers.

* * *

When called to weigh evidence and draw inferences from that evidence, judges must tread lightly, avoiding trespassing on the domain reserved for juries. *See Anderson*, 477 U.S. at 255 (1986). Here, because “conflicting inferences may be drawn from the facts”—on both Apache Knolls and the bank account—“the case must go to the jury.” *LaLonde v. Cnty. of Riverside*, 204 F.3d 947, 959 (9th Cir. 2000). Summary judgment was thus inappropriate. We should have reversed and remanded.

I respectfully dissent.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

FILED

UNITED STATES COURT OF APPEALS

JUL 24 2025

FOR THE NINTH CIRCUIT

MOLLY C. DWYER, CLERK
U.S. COURT OF APPEALS

THE SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC
CHURCH MINISTRIES BISHOP,
ELIZABETH GARDNER
CORPORATION SOLE AND HER
SUCCESSORS,

Plaintiff - Appellant,

v.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA,

Defendant - Appellee.

No. 24-1765

D.C. No.

3:21-cv-08277-DJH

MEMORANDUM*

Appeal from the United States District Court
for the District of Arizona

Diane J. Humetewa, District Judge, Presiding

Argued and Submitted May 12, 2025
Phoenix, Arizona

Before: RAWLINSON, BUMATAY, and SANCHEZ, Circuit Judges.
Dissent by Judge BUMATAY.

Plaintiff Society of Apostolic Church Ministries Bishop (“the Society”)
brought this suit against Defendant United States challenging the Internal Revenue
Service’s (“IRS”) tax lien on the Society’s Apache Knolls property and levy on the

* This disposition is not appropriate for publication and is not precedent
except as provided by Ninth Circuit Rule 36-3.

Society's bank account to recover \$826,381.05 in unpaid taxes owed by Elizabeth and Frederic Gardner for tax years 2002 through 2004. This action reflects another entry in a decades-long effort by the Gardners to avoid paying income taxes—an effort that has already reached this court four times.¹

The IRS' tax lien and levy proceeded under the theory that the Society is the Gardners' "nominee." A "nominee" is "one who holds bare legal title to property for the benefit of another." *Fourth Inv. LP v. United States*, 720 F.3d 1058, 1066 (9th Cir. 2013) (citation omitted). We review the district court's grant of summary judgment for the Government de novo, considering the evidence in the light most favorable to the Society and drawing all reasonable inferences in its favor as the nonmoving party. *See Hittle v. City of Stockton*, 101 F.4th 1000, 1011 (9th Cir. 2024).² We affirm.

Under 28 U.S.C. §§ 6321 and 6331, the IRS has broad powers to impose tax liens and levies upon properties belonging to persons who have not paid their

¹ *See Gardner v. Comm'r of Internal Revenue*, 845 F.3d 971, 973–74 (9th Cir. 2017) (describing history of the Gardners' tax evasion efforts); *see also Gardner v. IRS*, 672 F. App'x 776, 777 (9th Cir. 2017) (holding that Gardners' church was their alter ego for tax levy purposes); *United States v. Gardner*, 457 F. App'x 611, 612 (9th Cir. 2011) (affirming injunction barring the Gardners from "promoting, organizing, and selling their corporation sole tax scheme").

² The district court applied the factors articulated in *Towe Antique Ford Foundation v. IRS*, 791 F. Supp. 1450, 1453 (D. Mon. 1992) to determine if the Society is the Gardners' nominee. Neither party disputes the use of the *Towe* factors to determine nominee status.

taxes. See *G.M. Leasing Corp. v. United States*, 429 U.S. 338, 349–50 (1977).

The authority conferred by these statutory provisions is “broad and reveals on its face that Congress meant to reach every interest in property that a taxpayer might have.” *United States v. Nat’l Bank of Com.*, 472 U.S. 713, 719–20 (1985). This power extends to “all property of a taxpayer, including property that is held by a third party as the taxpayer’s nominee or alter ego.” *Fourth Inv. LP*, 720 F.3d at 1066 (citing *G.M. Leasing Corp.*, 429 U.S. at 350–51).

Although the *Towe* factors are a helpful guide in assessing the Society’s nominee status, our ultimate focus is on the “totality of the circumstances,” with the “overarching consideration” being “whether the taxpayer exercised active or substantial control over the property.” *Id.* at 1070 (cleaned up). Reviewing de novo, we find no genuine disputes of material fact concerning the district court’s determination that the Society was the Gardners’ nominee.

As the district court concluded, undisputed record evidence establishes that the Gardners exercised “active or substantial control” over the Apache Knolls property despite the Society holding legal title to it. *Id.* The property’s deed chain shows that Elizabeth Gardner repeatedly transferred the property to and from herself as corporation sole of various entities, including the Society, for no consideration. Mrs. Gardner also transferred the property to and from herself and

her husband in their individual capacities without consideration.³

The record also reflects that the Gardners continued to enjoy the benefits of the Apache Knolls property through each change in legal ownership. They have lived on the property for over twenty years. The Society pays for the Gardners' utilities and living expenses, such as their gas and telephone bills, cable and internet services, and their residential homeowner's insurance policy—despite the Gardners registering many of these accounts in their name. These undisputed facts establish the existence of a nominee relationship, *i.e.*, the Society held bare legal title to the Apache Knolls property to benefit the Gardners.

The Society does not point to any record evidence contradicting the district court's conclusion. Instead, the Society argues that a corporation sole is allowed to own and manage real property. But this appeal does not concern the legality of a corporation sole. The corporation sole form can be abused just like any other

³ The dissent suggests that these transfers primarily reflect the name changes of the Gardners' church, but that is belied by the record. The Apache Knolls property has been owned and transferred between the Gardners in their individual capacity, the Gardners' church, Messiah's Remnant, and the Society, which is a different legal entity altogether. Only one of the five property transfers on the deed chain could be attributable to a church name change. The dissent also contends that transfer to the Gardners individually to qualify for a personal loan raises a triable dispute. It does not. Nominee analysis is concerned with whether the taxpayer had active or substantial control over property held by a third party, not *why* they exercised such control. *See Fourth Inv. LP*, 720 F.3d at 1070. Multiple transfers of the Apache Knolls property to different entities controlled by the Gardners for no consideration establishes the uncontradicted fact that the Gardners exercised active and substantial control over the property.

relationship or entity. Where the undisputed evidence shows that the Gardners exercised active or substantial control over the Apache Knolls property to benefit themselves despite the Society holding legal title to it, the IRS was allowed to reach the property to recover taxes owed by the Gardners.

The same conclusion holds with respect to the Society's bank account. Undisputed testimony by the Society's leadership establishes that the Gardners had decision-making authority over the Society's finances and exercised substantial control over the Society's bank account. Frederic Gardner was the co-signer on the bank account. The Society paid for the Gardners' various living expenses and utilities from this account. The Society even paid for a portion of the Gardners' legal fees from this account.

Our dissenting colleague contends that nominee status must be evaluated on an asset-by-asset basis, and the district court's failure to conduct such an analysis with respect to the Society's bank account requires reversal.⁴ But the Society never raised this argument either in briefing before the district court or on appeal here. Even if it were the applicable standard, the district court did analyze the

⁴ The dissent cites *Oxford Capital Corp. v. United States*, 211 F.3d 280 (5th Cir. 2000) for this proposition, but that decision required only that a court conducting a nominee analysis determine if the "taxpayer in fact has beneficial ownership" over the property in which legal title is held by a third party. *See id.* at 284. *Oxford Capital* is consistent with our "totality of the circumstances" test requiring a showing that the "taxpayer exercised active or substantial control over the property." *See Fourth Inv. LP*, 720 F.3d at 1070.

Society's bank account in its discussion of the *Towe* factors. The district court found that the Society pays for the Gardners' "bills and expenses" as well as their "legal fees" from the Society's checking account, and it concluded, under a totality of the circumstances, that the Gardners exercised "active or substantial control" over the Society's bank account and used the Society's funds to benefit themselves. The Society points to no evidence in the record contradicting the district court's conclusion.⁵

The Society and the dissent contend that a triable dispute exists with respect to a \$50,000 donation made by a now-deceased Society member. The Society claims this donation was made to the Society to help a member in need. The record does not bear this out. Mrs. Gardner testified that the donor's instructions were for the money "to be used for the ministry for special need(s) – *for you if need be* – helping someone else." The donor's successor similarly stated that the donation was "for a special hardship [Mrs. Gardner] chose and if hard times came upon themselves use it for that necessity also." This instruction does not give rise to a disputed issue of material fact.

Finally, the dissent contends that the Government exhibits disrespect for

⁵ The dissent makes much of the distinction between the Society's checking account and money market account, both with Wells Fargo. The distinction is of no moment because the undisputed evidence establishes that the funds in the Wells Fargo money market account were transferred from the Society's checking account.

minority religions and does not view the Society as a bona fide religion. Nothing in the record or briefing supports this bald assertion. This is not a case about religion or how a church operates. It is about the determination of who owns and actively controls certain assets held for the benefit of another—the very purpose of nominee analysis and an inquiry that can be made without implicating protected First Amendment interests. *See Presbyterian Church in U.S. v. Mary Elizabeth Blue Hull Mem'l Presbyterian Church*, 393 U.S. 440, 449 (1969) (“Civil courts do not inhibit free exercise of religion merely by opening their doors to disputes involving church property. And there are neutral principles of law, developed for use in all property disputes, which can be applied without ‘establishing’ churches to which property is awarded.”).

This appeal involves a straightforward determination of whether the Society held bare legal title to property for the benefit of the Gardners. The Society has produced no evidence establishing a genuine dispute of material fact that the Society is the Gardners’ nominee as to the Apache Knolls property and the Society’s bank account. Accordingly, summary judgment was properly granted in the Government’s favor.

AFFIRMED.



AFFIDAVIT FOR TAX EXEMPTION

Spices
please collect.

326	
DATE	12/4/01
TYPE	RELIGIOUS
NAME	IZABETH GARDNER
PHONE	623-374-0220

NOTE: Our records indicate that the following documentation is missing from our files:
501 C,

502-07014Q-4	CHURCH MEETINGS & OFFICE PASTOR'S PARISH	F	F
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[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
19 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
1988 [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED] [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

At the request of **Capital Title Agency Inc.**
when recorded mail to
BETHEL ARAM MINISTRIES
P.O. 2038

DEWEY, AZ 86327

FEE
\$
\$8
\$5
\$1
\$10

PAGE 2 OF 5
BK 4037 PG 675 FEE#3588624
3573522 BK 4024 PG 613
Yavapai County, Arizona
Patsy Jenney-Colon, Recorder
04/24/2003 03:27P PAGE 1 OF 4
CAPITAL TITLE AGENCY
RECORDING FEE 7.00
SURCHARGE 8.00
POSTAGE 1.00

53030352-SJW

Tax Parcel No. 402-02-432N

Warranty Deed

For the consideration of Ten Dollars, and other valuable considerations, I or we,

DENNIS M. REPAN and OLGA REPAN, husband and wife, as joint tenants with right of survivorship

do hereby convey to **ELIZABETH A. GARDNER, A CORPORATION SOLE OF BETHEL ARAM MINISTRIES**

~~ELIZABETH A. GARDNER, A CORPORATION SOLE OF BETHEL ARAM MINISTRIES~~

the following real property situated in Yavapai County, Arizona:

SEE EXHIBIT "A" ATTACHED HERETO AND MADE A PART HEREOF

SUBJECT TO: Current taxes and other assessments, reservations in patents and all easements, rights of way, encumbrances, liens, covenants, conditions, restrictions, obligations, and liabilities as may appear of record.

And I or we do warrant the title against all persons whomsoever, subject to the matters set forth above.

April 8, 2003

STATE OF ARIZONA

County of Yavapai

ss

This instrument was acknowledged before me this 10th day of April, 2003, by DENNIS M. REPAN and OLGA REPAN

Notary Public

My commission will expire 10/31/04



OFFICIAL SEAL
SARAH WHITTEN
Notary Public - State of Arizona
YAVAPAI COUNTY
My Comm. Expires Oct. 31, 2004

ER-147

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF CALIFORNIA)
) ss
County of Los Angeles)

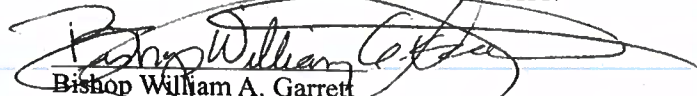
BEFORE ME, the undersigned, on this day personally appeared William A. Garrett known to me to be credible person who, after being by me duly sworn on his oath, did depose and testify as follows:

1. My name is William A. Garrett. I am well over the age of eighteen years and am fully competent to make this affidavit.
2. I have been an Elder and member of The Society of Apostolic Church Ministries since 2008.
3. The Society of Apostolic Church Ministries consists of pastors, evangelists, bishops, apostles, missionaries, etc. that hold the office of corporation sole for their church ministry. We are required to pay membership fees yearly according to the decision of the Elders at one of the yearly conferences. Many of the members give donations besides the annual membership fee.
4. When I became Elder there were over 140+ members that belonged to the society until Covid hit, deaths and various happenings. It dripped down year after year to now we have approximately 85+ strong and active members in the faith of the gospel.
5. Bishop Dr. Elizabeth Gardner is the corporation sole of The Society of Apostolic Church Ministries that has a yearly 3-day conference. At the conference there is worship, teaching from Bishop Elizabeth and Fredric Gardner, society decisions, and various outside speakers on various spiritual topics.
6. The Society headquarters is located at 570 Apache Knolls Trail in Dewey, AZ. It holds the property in its own right in fee simple. It was donated to the Society by Church Restoration Ministries in 2019. The local church Messiah's Remnant has had weekly church meetings at the location for over 20 years and has been the parsonage for the pastors.
7. Bishop Elizabeth Gardner as the corporation sole and the Elders had agreed as to how things are to be paid in the exercise of the canon of the church.
8. The Society takes care of all the expenses and maintenance of the property since the Society owns the property and it is their headquarters and the parsonage of the pastors of the local church that meets there. Bishop Elizabeth Gardner as the corporation sole of the Society makes sure everything is taken care of concerning the property and the counseling and requests of the corporation sole members.
9. Some of the expenses are the Society is the Society's vehicles maintenance and propane gas. Pastor Fredric Gardner is the contract with the propane company at the property to provide heat for the church and parsonage and the Society pays the bill. The Society is also taking care of the church and parsonage house insurance premiums and vehicle insurance. The insurance is in the name of Pastors Elizabeth and Fredric because of the high cost of company insurance.
10. Because of the pastors low income of Social Security and their older years, the Society feels it should be compassionate to their needs, and sometimes pays for their out-of-pocket expense for medical expense that Medicare doesn't pay when it is needed.

Case 3:21-cv-08277-DJH Document 44-4 Filed 07/26/23 Page 3 of 3

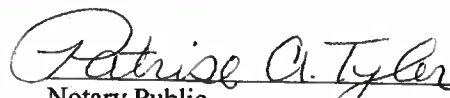
The foregoing Affidavit and all the facts herein are true and correct and within my own personal knowledge.

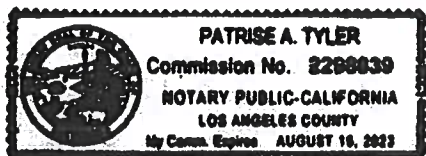
FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.


Bishop William A. Garrett
The Way, The Church

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN to before me on this 18TH day of July 2023, to certify which is in witness of my hand and seal of office.

My Commission Expires:


Notary Public



When recorded, mail to:

Messiah House Fellowship
P. O. Box 2038
Dewey, AZ 86327

B: 4985 P: 42 09/12/2012 11:23:40 AM UD
Leslie N. Hoffman
OFFICIAL RECORDS OF YAVAPAI COUNTY \$10.00
MESSIAH HOUSE FELLOWSHIP 2012-0051258

B: 4985 P: 42 09/12/2012 11:23:40 AM UD
\$10.00 Page 1 of 4 2012-0051258
[Barcode]

WARRANTY DEED

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

**NO TRANSFER FEE NECESSARY
EXEMPT UNDER ARS 11-1134**

A-7

That, the undersigned Grantor, Elizabeth A Gardner a Corporation Sole, of Bethel Aram Ministries hereby donates the equity of the below described property to **PASTOR, ELIZABETH A. GARDNER AND HER SUCCESSORS, A CORPORATION SOLE OF MESSIAH HOUSE FELLOWSHIP**, Grantee, all rights, title and interest to and in that certain parcel of Real Property situated in the County of Yavapai, in the State of Arizona, and described as follows:

See Attached Exhibit "A" Hereto Description of Property and made a Part Hereof.

SUBJECT TO: Current taxes other assessments, reservations in patents and all easements, rights of way, encumbrances, liens, covenants, conditions, restrictions, obligations, and liabilities as may appear of record.

And I do warrant the title against all persons whomsoever, subject to the matters set forth above.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above-described property, together with the tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances hereunto in fee simple belonging unto Grantee, Grantee's heirs, and/or assigns forever.

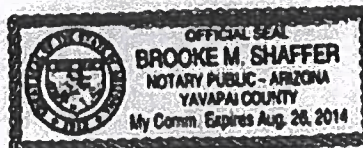

Grantor

STATE OF ARIZONA)
) ss.
County of Yavapai)

This instrument was acknowledged before me this 12th day of September, 2012, by Elizabeth A. Gardner, a corporation sole, known to me to be the individual who executed the foregoing instrument

My Commission Expires: 8-26-14


Notary Public



EX-1

Exhibit 9 - 012

B: 4942 P: 384 03/07/2013 11:22:32 AM UD
Leslie M. Hoffman
OFFICIAL RECORDS OF YAVAPAI COUNTY \$10.00
FREDRIC GARDNER 2013-0013626

B: 4942 P: 384 03/07/2013 11:22:32 AM UD
\$10.00 Page 1 of 4 2013-0013626

When recorded, mail to:

Church Restoration Ministries
P. O. 2038
Dewey, AZ 85327

WARRANTY DEED

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That, the undersigned Grantor, Fredric A. & Elizabeth A. Gardner, husband and wife, hereby donates the equity of the below described property to Grantee, Church Restoration Ministries, Bishop, Elizabeth A. Gardner, a corporation sole and her Successors all rights, title and interest to and in that certain parcel of Real Property situated in the County of Yavapai, in the State of Arizona and described as follows:

See Attached Exhibit "A" Hereto Description of Property and made a Part Hereof.

No Transfer fee necessary exempt under ARS 11-1134 A 7

SUBJECT TO: Current taxes other assessments, reservations in patents and all easements, rights of way, encumbrances, liens, covenants, conditions, restrictions, obligations, and liabilities as may appear of record.

And I do warrant the title against all persons whomsoever, subject to the matters set forth above.

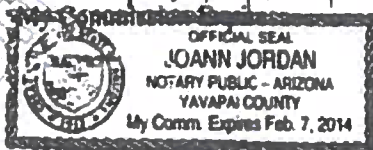
TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above-described property, together with the tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances hereunto in fee simple belonging unto Grantee, Grantee's heirs, and/or assigns forever.

Elizabeth A. Gardner
Grantor: Elizabeth A. Gardner

Fredric A. Gardner
Grantor: Fredric A. Gardner

STATE OF ARIZONA)
) ss.
County of Yavapai)

This instrument was acknowledged before me this 5th day of March, 2013 by Fredric A. & Elizabeth A. Gardner, known to me to be the individual who executed the foregoing instrument.



Joann Jordan
Notary Public

Exhibit 9 - 020

ER-132

Case 3:21-cv-08277-DJH Document 25 Filed 05/11/22 Page 15 of 32

JUDD W. SIMMONS, ASSESSOR

DAVID "BEAU" BOISVERT, CHIEF DEPUTY

1015 FAIR STREET, PRESCOTT, AZ 86305 PHONE [REDACTED] - FAX [REDACTED]

10 S. 6TH STREET, COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326 PHONE [REDACTED] - FAX [REDACTED]



WWW.YAVAPAI.US

November 2, 2018

Church Restoration Ministries-Messiah's Remnant
PO Box 2038
Dewey, AZ 86327

Re: 2018 Request for Non-Profit Tax Exemption

Dear Mrs. Gardner,

Per review of the following parcel(s) a Full Exemption has been granted:

402-02-432N

There will be a 2018 Notice of Proposed Correction mailed to you allowing the Full Exemption on the above parcel(s); sign and return paperwork to our office.

Keep in mind when any change(s) occur, such as contact information, use of property, or purchase of more property, please contact our office as soon as possible. This will assist us in making the appropriate change(s) and/or grant additional exemptions based on use.

Contact the Prescott office if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Karen M. Vick".

Karen Vick
Customer Service Supervisor
Yavapai County Assessor's Office

Cc: Musgrove Drutz Kack & Flack, PC

ER-149

DOJ-RLC Comment-005769

AFFIDAVIT

STATE OF WASHINGTON)
) ss
 County of Ferry)

BEFORE ME, the undersigned, on this day personally appeared Richard McCollam known to me to be credible person who, after being by me duly sworn on his oath, did depose and testify as follows:

1. My name is Richard McCollam. I am over the age of eighteen years and am fully competent to make this affidavit.

2. I am the appointed successor of Elder Reynolds Nelson corporation sole on behalf of Grace Ministries who passed in late spring of 2013. Elder Reynolds was a member of the Society of Apostolic Church Ministries. (SACM)

3. Bishop Rev. Elizabeth Gardner, corporation sole of SACM and Rev. Fredric Gardner came to Washington at the call of Reynolds Nelson as he was passing with Cancer. Mr. Nelson wanted to get his house and ministry in order before he passed.

4. Elder Nelson wanted Bishop and her husband to help him with choosing a successor for his ministry. Elder Nelson was very acquainted with me and my ministry and counseled with Bishop Gardner as if I should be considered and appointed for that office of corporation sole successor of his ministry.

5. Bishop Gardner and her husband stayed with Elder Nelson for approximate 2-3 weeks comforting and taking care of him in this tragic illness. Days before he had to go to the hospital, Elder Nelson called Bishop Gardner to his side and handed her an envelope with a check in the amount of \$50,000.00 written to SACM and asked her to use it for a special hardship she chose and if hard times came upon themselves use it for that necessity also.

4. After Elder Nelson's demise, Bishop Gardner and her husband stayed in Washington and helped me with the responsible of taking over Elder Nelson's ministries real estate and financial banking and to change everything to me as the successor of Elder Nelson ministry estate.

5. I changed Grace Ministry to Under His Shadow Missions because of my ministry of Missions.

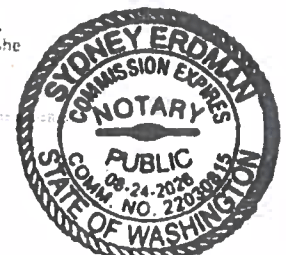
The foregoing Affidavit and all the facts herein are true and correct and within my own personal knowledge.

FURTHER AFFIANT SAYETH NAUGHT.

Richard McCollam
 Richard McCollam
 Elder, Under His Shadow Missions

Acknowledgment

State of Washington
 County of Ferry
 On this 19 day of 3, 2024, Richard McCollam
 personally appeared before me,
 who is personally known to me,
 whose identity I verified on the basis of Driver's license
 whose identity I verified on the oath/affirmation of _____ a credible witness,
 to be the signer of the foregoing document, and he/she
 acknowledged that he/she signed it.
 Notary signature Sydney Erdman
 My commission expires: 8-24-24





P.O. Box 7600
Glendale, AZ 85312-7600

Statement Period

08/01/2021 - 08/31/2021

Account #

XXXXX993

SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC CHURCH MINISTRIES
PO BOX 2038
DEWEY AZ 86327-2038



Statement Summary

Deposit Accounts			Total Balance:		\$13.31
Account Type	Previous Balance	Deposits	Withdrawals	Ending Balance	
BUSINESS SAVINGS (ID 0000)	\$5.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$5.00	
MONEY MARKET PLUS (ID 0020)	\$50,542.70	\$22,799.54	\$73,340.37	\$1.87	
BUSINESS CHECKING (ID 0090)	\$22,734.11	\$105.00	\$22,832.67	\$6.44	

BUSINESS SAVINGS (ID 0000)

		PREVIOUS BALANCE:		\$5.00
Date	Transaction Description	Deposits	Withdrawals	Balance
No Activity During This Statement Period				
		ENDING BALANCE:		\$5.00
YTD Dividends:		\$0.00		

MONEY MARKET PLUS (ID 0020)

		PREVIOUS BALANCE:		\$50,542.70
Date	Transaction Description	Deposits	Withdrawals	Balance
08/10	Deposit	\$22,797.67		\$73,340.37
	TO PAY IRS LEVY			
	PAY IRS LEVY			
08/10	Withdrawal by Check		\$73,340.37	\$0.00
	Check 00 100401166 Disbursed 73,340.37			
08/31	Deposit Dividend	\$1.87		\$1.87
		ENDING BALANCE:		\$1.87
The Annual Percentage Yield Earned from 08/01/21 through 08/31/21 is 0.150%				
Average Daily Balance		\$14,673.69	2 Deposits Totaling	\$22,799.54
1 Withdrawals Totaling		\$73,340.37	YTD Dividends:	\$126.95

Case 3:21-cv-08277-DJH Document 25 Filed 05/11/22 Page 17 of 32

When recorded, mail to:

Society of Apostolic Church Ministries
P. O. Box 2038
Dewey, AZ 86327

2019-0032308

05/27/2019 12:27:09 PM

WD

Page: 1 of 3

Leslie M. Hoffman

OFFICIAL RECORDS OF YAVAPAI COUNTY \$15.00
SOCIETY OF APOSTOLIC CHURCH MINISTRIES



WARRANTY DEED

KNOW ALL MEN BY THESE PRESENTS:

That, the undersigned Grantor, Church Restoration Ministries, Elizabeth A. Gardner, a corporation sole and her Successors hereby conveys the below described property to the **Society of Apostolic Church Ministries, Bishop Elizabeth A. Gardner, corporation sole and her successors**, Grantee all rights, title and interest to and in that certain parcel of Real Property situated in the County of Yavapai, in the State of Arizona described as follows:

See attached Exhibit "A" hereto Description of Property and made a part hereof.

No transfer fee necessary exempt under ARS 11-1134 A7

SUBJECT TO: Current taxes other assessments, reservations in patents and all easements, rights of way, encumbrances, liens, covenants, conditions, restrictions, obligations, and liabilities as may appear of record.

The Grantor warrants the title against all persons whomsoever, subject to the matters set forth above.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the above-described property, together with the tenements, hereditaments, and appurtenances hereunto in fee simple.

Elizabeth A. Gardner
Bishop, a corporation sole
Church Restoration Ministries

State of Arizona)
)ss.
County of Yavapai)

The foregoing instrument was acknowledged before me this 27th day of June, 2019 by Elizabeth A. Gardner, Bishop, Church Restoration Ministries known to me to be the individual who executed the foregoing instrument.

My Commission expires:

Nov 13 2022

Notary Public

SHASTA L. MEJIA
Notary Public - Arizona
Yavapai Co. / #553412
Expires 11/13/2022

Case 3:21-cv-08277-DJH Document 25 Filed 05/11/22 Page 19 of 39
JUDD W. SIMMONS, ASSESSOR

DAVID "BEAU" BOISVERT, CHIEF DEPUTY

1015 FAIR STREET, PRESCOTT, AZ 86305 PHONE [REDACTED] FAX [REDACTED] Phone Number [REDACTED]

10 S. 6TH STREET, COTTONWOOD, AZ 86326 PHONE [REDACTED] FAX [REDACTED] Phone Number [REDACTED]



WWW.YAVAPAI.US

July 15, 2019

Society of Apostolic Church Ministries
c/o Elizabeth Gardner, Bishop
PO Box 2038
Dewey, AZ 86327

Re: 2019 Request for Non-Profit Tax Exemption

Dear Mrs. Gardner,

Per the name change of the church this is confirmation the following parcel(s) will maintain the Full Exemption:

402-02-432N

Keep in mind when any change(s) occur, such as contact information, use of property, or purchase of more property, please contact our office as soon as possible. This will assist us in making the appropriate change(s) and/or grant additional exemptions based on use.

Contact the Prescott office if you have further questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Karen M. Vick", is written over a horizontal line.

Karen Vick
Customer Service Supervisor
Yavapai County Assessor's Office

ER-153

DOJ-RLC Comment-005773



TYPE OF ACCOUNT/SERVICE

STATUS

BUSINESS INFORMATION

AUTHORIZED SIGNER INFORMATION

DOJ-RL

No. 14

8 778 7156 800 624 0287
THIS IS A TRUE CERTIFIED COPY OF THE ORIGINAL
REV 3-2018

DOJ-RLC Comment-005774



DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY
INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE
WASHINGTON, DC 20224

SMALL BUSINESS/SELF-EMPLOYED DIVISION

Date: 07/20/2021

Credit Union West
PO Box 7600
Glendale AZ 85312

To Whom It May Concern,

Please find the attached Form 668-A Notice of Levy issued to the following:

Society of Apostolic Church Ministries, as the nominee of Frederic A. Gardner with
respect to bank account # 0000341993 held at Credit Union West Bank
EIN# 32-0329977

[REDACTED]
Account# 0000341993

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact me at the address or
the telephone number listed below:

Internal Revenue Service
300 WEST CONGRESS
FB 46 MS 5104
TUCSON, AZ 85701-1371
Jeanette Vega@irs.gov
Phone#: [REDACTED]
Fax#: [REDACTED]

Sincerely,

JEANETTE VEGA
REVENUE OFFICER
Employee ID#: 1000849423



Society of Apostolic Church Ministries <sacm0770@gmail.com>

Letter

2 messages

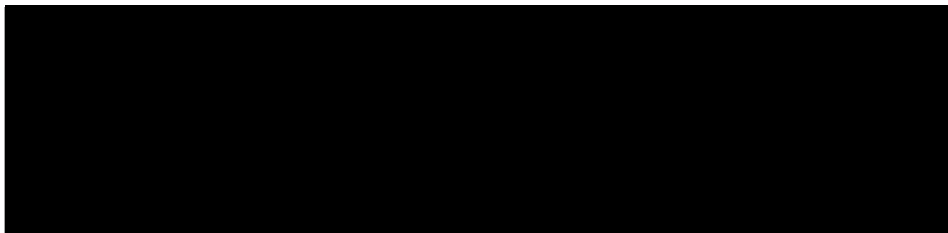


Hello [redacted]

This letter is to confirm that [redacted] is not a member or authorized signer for the [redacted] accounts with Credit Union West.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you,



(*Enter PIN: CUw3st)

EX-2

From: [REDACTED]

To: [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] FW: Request to Add Agenda Item on GRACE Act – 9/8 or 9/29 Hearings on Religious Liberty in Education

Date: Mon, 29 Sep 2025 14:59:33 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: GRACE_Act_and_Religious_Liberty_in_Education.pdf

Inline-Images: image001.png

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]  [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

From: Guiding The Impact <[REDACTED]>

Date: Monday, September 1, 2025 at 2:38 PM

To: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Subject: Request to Add Agenda Item on GRACE Act – 9/8 or 9/29 Hearings on Religious Liberty in Education

Dear [REDACTED]elford,

We pray that God moves your hearts to embrace the message in this letter and feel compassion for the countless families enduring hardship and persecution for their faith. On behalf of Guiding the Impact, a coalition of religious liberty and medical liberty advocates and faith leaders, we extend our heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast leadership in advancing the cause of religious freedom in education.

With your upcoming hearings on September 8th and September 29th focused on religious liberty in education, we respectfully urge you to include an agenda item on the recently introduced GRACE Act (Guaranteeing Religious Accommodation in Childhood Education Act), sponsored by Congressman Greg Steube.

This bill addresses what we believe is one of the most grievous violations of religious liberty in education today: children in states such as New York, California, Connecticut, and Maine are being barred from schools simply because their families uphold religious convictions regarding vaccination. Denying a child access to education based on their faith is a profound injustice that demands urgent national attention and immediate action by your Commission and the President.

Attached is a policy memo on the GRACE Act, which we believe is directly relevant to your hearings. While the GRACE Act represents a critical step toward ensuring no child in America is excluded from the classroom for honoring their family's beliefs, families need relief now. Including this issue in the September 8th or September 29th hearings would underscore its urgency and amplify the voices of families currently facing persecution.

Thank you for considering this request. I would be honored to provide additional information, testify in person, or connect you with families directly impacted by these policies.

|

With gratitude,

Elyse Young

Founder, Guiding the Impact



The GRACE Act and Religious Liberty in Education

Background

- On August 29, 2025, Congressman Greg Steube (FL-17) introduced the GRACE Act (Guaranteeing Religious Accommodation in Childhood Education Act).
- The bill prohibits federal education funding to schools and agencies that deny students religious exemptions from vaccination requirements for classroom attendance, athletics, and other activities.
- This legislation addresses the urgent crisis in states such as New York, California, Connecticut, and Maine, where children are barred from schools because their families uphold religious convictions regarding vaccination.

Why This Matters for the September 8th and September 29th Hearings

The Religious Liberty Commission's upcoming hearings on religious liberty in education provide a critical platform to address:

- One of the most severe violations of religious liberty in education today: the exclusion of children from schools based on their families' faith.
- A direct infringement of the First Amendment's Free Exercise Clause, undermining the constitutional rights of families.
- A real-world crisis impacting countless families across multiple states, who face educational exclusion, legal penalties, or economic hardship.

Key Points on the GRACE Act

- ***Restores fairness:*** Ensures equitable treatment by requiring religious exemptions where medical exemptions are permitted.
- ***Protects families of faith:*** Guarantees that no child is denied education for honoring their beliefs.
- ***Broad precedent:*** Forty-six states already balance public health and religious liberty by allowing exemption, demonstrating a workable model.
- ***Constitutional grounding:*** Conditions federal education funds in a narrowly tailored manner, designed to withstand judicial scrutiny.

Why Urgent Action by the Religious Liberty Commission and the President Is Critical

- Families in affected states are suffering immediate harm -- denied education, facing legal penalties, or forced into economic hardship due to their faith.
- The GRACE Act offers a concrete, active legislative response to this crisis.
- Including the GRACE Act in the September 8th or September 29th hearings would amplify the voices of impacted families, underscore the Commission's commitment to religious liberty, and urge swift presidential action through an Executive Order to provide immediate relief.



From: Thea [REDACTED] PII >

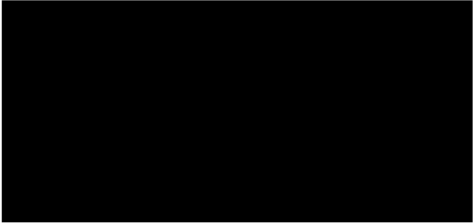
To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty Commission Testimony from Connecticut. God bless you.

Date: Sat, 06 Sep 2025 13:52:54 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Testimony.pdf



Subject: My testimony for The Religious Liberty Commission

To: The Religious Liberty Commission

U.S, Department of Justice

Office of The Associate Attorney General

950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. Room 5706

Washington, D.C. 20530

Dear distinguished members of The Religious Liberty Commission,

Have any of you ever looked at your child and known that the suffering they were experiencing was something you could have prevented? My daughter's name is [REDACTED]. She has brown eyes and a heart for God. She compares reading books to breathing fresh air. [REDACTED] a high honors student all through her high school and college education, received her degree in History, and set her sights on another in toxicology. I look at [REDACTED] and I see a beautiful and intelligent Christian woman, but I also wish that I knew the truth about vaccines; that I had researched Gardasil before allowing her pediatrician to give it to her.

At the age of 14, [REDACTED] life was changes forever. Even now, she struggles with allergies to foods and gluten, autoimmune disorders, and severe joint pain improved by diet and homeopathic vitamins and treatments. I'll never forget how my daughter suffered the first two years after getting that shot. The treatments and tests from Yale, UCONN, and CCMC for two years offered false diagnosis and false hope. Her pain was so bad walking was impossible at times. I had to carry her up and down the stairs of our home because she walked with the gate of a 90-year-old and she withered down to a fragile, frail, and frightened 95 pounds; and when the tests didn't reveal a cause they could get behind, they said it was all in her head. They crushed her in that moment. Not one doctor would entertain that my daughter had a negative reaction to a vaccine.

big, beautiful, brown eyes looking to me to make the pain go away and being abandoned by the people entrusted to help her was life altering and I realized just how essential it is for parents to be the primary caregivers and decision makers in their children's health, and that parents should be entitled to the truth behind all vaccines and medications, allowed to advocate for the children God has given to them, never shamed or pressured for refusing or questioning anything with a potential to harm them. It seems like common sense, but the battle is real.

When the Covid pandemic came, was working part time and going to school. The pressure and threats of termination at work and expulsion from school, if she didn't agree to take the Covid shot and all boosters to follow, were relentless. Having been vaccine injured, did her own research into the shot and didn't like what she read. Her discernment through prayer told her not to and I supported her right to refuse it. Her pastor was willing to write her a religious exemption, but The State of Connecticut Legislature removed the religious exemptions. The Senate Majority Leader, Bob Duff, testified that there was no way to tell if Christians were lying about their faith in God. He decided that if we could not prove our faith, then we didn't deserve to exercise it. Her employer allowed her to remain employed but made her wear a double mask. Naugatuck Valley Community College was not as understanding. Her dream was to pursue toxicology, which required labs that could not be done with online classes, so she was forced to leave school. This interruption in her life, and in her pursuits, was unfair and hardly constitutional.

If I were to look for a blessing in the Covid chaos, it would be my decision to homeschool my youngest son, struggled in school and part of special education. Covid came, and with it, distance learning. Distance learning was a disaster. Everybody knows that. Then, the regional BOE announced a mandatory 14-day quarantine following a household member traveling out of state. My husband's work required significant travel, and it appeared would never be admitted in school. I sent the letter of intent to homeschool and didn't look back. Today, is in 10th grade. He, like loves to read. He is above grade level in all subjects. He enjoys boxing, bicycling, and horseback riding. He has benefitted enormously from homeschool and we engage with many other homeschool families having picnics, going fishing, swimming, sledding, and many other activities.

success is one of many in the homeschool community. Home school children in our state are outperforming their public-school peers academically and are more active and socialized, eliminating the falsehood that our children are isolated. Public school children are facing depression and anxiety at epidemic levels, being prescribed medications for this diagnosis, including marijuana. Homeschooled kids are not suffering

from the mental and emotional disorders seen in the public schools. Teaching our kids at home allows us to incorporate God and our Christian Faith into their learning. We read The Bible. We openly talk about our Faith and take pride in our family, our community, and our home.

Connecticut schools have subjected students to Critical Race Theory, pornographic material passed off as education tools for children as young as 8 years old, and transgender activism. Last legislative session, Democrats tried to undermine homeschool families by using the tragic incident of a man from Waterbury, Ct, who was held captive in a home for almost 20 years. While he attended the Waterbury public school system, numerous complaints were filed to the Department of Children and Families. A family member removed him from the school stating they were moving to Wolcott, Ct. The Department of Children and Families and Waterbury School system never followed up with this child. There was no letter of intent to homeschool but Democrat legislators in Connecticut deliberately lied, twisting the story with the help of media, disparaging and defaming the homeschool families here in The Constitution State. They attempted to pass legislation to regulate us without giving us an opportunity to testify before passing a bill. Homeschool families flooded the capitol building in Hartford with a very peaceful but very powerful protest. Connecticut Democrats have publicly promised to try again despite having no reason to regulate us. I believe that it is a parent's First Amendment right, their religious liberty, to raise up their children in a Godly manner. The state of Connecticut, if allowed to regulate home schoolers, would prevent that; and then expose our children to hateful and divisive teachings, sexual deviance, and ideology that is against our own.

Homeschool families are not currently pressured to vaccinate as they are in the public school system. With enrollment in the Connecticut public schools down, and the test scores demonstrating their failures, legislators have promised to attack the heart of religious liberty itself; the nuclear families, especially the homeschool families that are indeed following their faith. It is my hope and my prayer that this commission investigates The State of Connecticut for its unconstitutional attacks on its citizens during Covid, eliminating the religious exemptions. I also hope it exercises whatever powers are given to it to investigate and intervene on behalf of homeschool families being unjustly targeted for our faith and family-based decisions, by Democratic legislators.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

From: [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>, "[REDACTED]"
<[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED] <[REDACTED]> [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Urgent request for relief of Weaponization of federal government.

Date: Fri, 29 Aug 2025 19:28:44 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: rekest_re_FBI_raid.pdf

To whom it may concern,

My name is [REDACTED] my wife is [REDACTED]

We are currently residents of [REDACTED], after fleeing Colorado's intense political persecution.

I am reaching out to your office as a last resort for relief and understanding regarding the incredible abuse and overreach of the federal government, under the leadership of Merrick Garland, directed at myself and my family.

I have provided a white paper of our experience attached to this email for your reference. Please understand this is an overview not a full accounting of the travesty that my family has experienced.

I am requesting a meeting with the appropriate authority to investigate and prosecute those responsible for abusing citizens of the United States of America for political purposes.

Thank you sincerely for your anticipated attention and response to this matter.

Respectfully,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Date: August 29, 2025

From: [REDACTED]

RE: FBI Raid

Subject: Request for Congressional Inquiry Into FBI Raid on [REDACTED] Family Home

To Whom It May Concern,

I am writing to formally request your assistance in initiating a congressional inquiry into the raid conducted on my family's home on [REDACTED], in [REDACTED]. To this day, no charges have ever been filed, no clear explanation has been given, and the lasting damage to my family has been devastating.

Background of the Incident:

On [REDACTED], our home was raided by the FBI, the Mesa County District Attorney's Office, and the Silt Police Department.

Agents surrounded our home in full gear, made a scene in the neighborhood, broke down our door with a battering ram, handcuffed both myself and my wife [REDACTED] in front of our young children, and searched our home for several hours.

The only explanation given at the time (by Mesa County District Attorney Michael Strewé, who was present during the raid) was that [REDACTED] "connects people."

The warrant cited "conspiracy to commit wire fraud," a vague and broad charge often used to justify such raids. No detailed explanation of the warrant or charges was ever provided.

Our children were traumatized as they witnessed agents handcuffing their parents, and one agent physically restrained our 18-year-old daughter by grabbing her hoodie when she attempted to retrieve her phone.

During the raid, agents seized personal property including cell phones, laptop, and desktop computer, which contained thousands of family photos and private files. Despite repeated requests for nearly 4 years, the FBI has never returned these belongings as of August 2025.

Misrepresentation and Lack of Transparency:

District Attorney Dan Rubinstein, along with Colorado Attorney General Phil Weiser, later issued a public statement claiming "no force was used" in the raid—in complete contradiction of actual events. Prior to leaving the home, FBI agents informed the Bishop's that "there's an 800 number you can call" for our destroyed front door, which would not close after they used a battering ram to break it down.

Despite repeated requests, including personal phone calls, FOIA requests by attorneys, etc., no body cam footage from the raid has ever been released.

To this day, no charges have been filed against us, as we did nothing unlawful. Yet it would appear that we are still under investigation and that this case is still open.

Consequences and repercussions for our family:

The raid caused profound and lasting harm.

My career in law enforcement and judicial services (20 years) was lost, largely due to the trauma and stress that followed.

Our family was pressured to relocate out of State due to the ongoing stress of the situation.

Our family has lost trust in the system that we had previously supported, worked within, and defended.

The emotional, financial, and reputational damage has been incalculable, and we still live without closure.

Context of Possible Retaliation:

Prior to the raid, [REDACTED] was actively and publicly involved in community activism, including the following:

- Advocating at local school board meetings regarding Colorado's educational policies.
- Volunteering with election integrity efforts, canvassing counties, and raising concerns with election data.
- Meeting openly with Mesa County officials, including Commissioners, the District Attorney's office, and even former U.S. Attorney General Merrick Garland at a public meeting.
- Working on a voluntary basis with former Mesa County Clerk Tina Peters regarding election data concerns.
- Participating in meetings where Congresswoman Lauren Boebert was also present.

All of this work was public, voluntary, and lawful. We are left to believe that our family was targeted for political reasons, simply for exercising our civic duty and engaging in constitutionally protected activities.

Request for Congressional Action:

We respectfully ask for your assistance in seeking accountability and closure. Specifically, we request that you:

1. Initiate a congressional inquiry into the raid and the actions taken by the FBI, Mesa County District Attorney's Office, and Silt Police Department, who seemingly colluded together in the execution of this raid.
2. Compel the release of body cam footage and all related records documenting the raid.
3. Secure the immediate return of our seized personal property.
4. Seek recompense for the severe damages and losses incurred by our family as a result of this unjust action.

Conclusion

This raid was unjustified, unconstitutional, and deeply destructive to our family. It appears that the raid was a retaliatory act to cause intimidation and to silence activated citizens.

Nearly four years later, we are still without answers, restitution, or closure. We ask for your help in ensuring that justice is pursued and that abuses of power such as this are not allowed to continue unchecked, especially in this nation where God-given rights are secured by the Constitution.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Respectfully,



From: Jacob Dell <[REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Cc: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII >, Josh Blackman <[REDACTED] PII >, [REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Urgent Appeal for RLC to Docket Religious Exemption Hearings in 2025

Date: Tue, 05 Aug 2025 17:50:20 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Urgent_Appeal_to_Docket_Religious_Exemption_Hearings_in_2025.pdf

VIA EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII

CC: Allyson Ho ([REDACTED] PII), Josh Blackman ([REDACTED] PII), Elyse Young ([REDACTED] PII)

August 5, 2025

Religious Liberty Commission
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Associate Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

Subject: Urgent Appeal for RLC to Docket Religious Exemption Hearings in 2025

Dear Director Mary Margaret Bush and Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As the pastor of the First Congregational Church of Woodbury, Connecticut, I write with urgency regarding the denial of religious exemptions to childhood vaccination requirements in New York, California, Connecticut, and Maine. These policies violate the First Amendment rights of families in my congregation and beyond. In my own church, two families, including those of my parishioners [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], have been forced out of the public school system due to their Christian convictions against the vaccine schedule, rooted in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 2 Corinthians 7:1.

For [REDACTED], the 2021 removal of the religious exemption left them no choice but to homeschool their three school-aged children, scaling back their freelance business and incurring added expenses for curriculum and enrichment—all while knowing dozens of other families face similar hardships. [REDACTED] is a homeschooling mom and U.S. Air Force veteran, chose this path after Connecticut's abusive COVID policies closed schools and stripped away religious exemptions. While her son [REDACTED] thrives in homeschooling, free from mandated vaccines and secular ideologies, she emphasizes that many families lack the resources to choose homeschooling, leaving their children without access to equal educational opportunities.

These families face impossible choices: compromise their faith, bear the heavy burden of homeschooling, or relocate, all of which harm their children's education and well-being. Your 2025 schedule lists September and October hearings on religious liberty in education. Since children in these states are barred from public, private, and faith-based schools over their families' religious objections, will these hearings address this injustice? I can't

imagine a greater threat to religious liberty in education than policies that exclude children from school entirely. With the school year approaching and significant public comments already submitted, this issue demands immediate attention.

I understand a dedicated hearing on vaccine-related matters is planned but does not appear on the 2025 schedule. Has it been delayed to 2026? If so, this is unacceptable given the ongoing harm to families. I respectfully urge the Commission to docket at least one representative from coalitions supporting these families to testify at the September and October education hearings. I also request that the dedicated vaccine hearing be docketed in 2025 to provide timely relief.

Thank you for your commitment to protecting religious liberty. I look forward to your response clarifying the timeline and opportunities to address this critical matter.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell, Pastor
The First Congregational Church of Woodbury

Address

Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

Mobile: PII

Email: PII

Website: <http://www.firstchurchwoodbury.org/>

Sermons: <https://jwdell.substack.com/>

I do not solicit money by email or text. E-mails or texts, supposedly from me, soliciting money or asking you to buy gift cards for someone in need, are a scam. Look carefully at the email address from any email that purports to be from me.

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

The First Congregational Church
AND THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY OF WOODBURY
[REDACTED] **Address** [REDACTED]
Woodbury, Connecticut 06798
[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]

THE REV. JACOB W. DELL, PASTOR

VIA EMAIL: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]
CC [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]
You [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]

August 5, 2025

Religious Liberty Commission
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Associate Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Room 5706
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For [REDACTED] the 2021 removal of the religious exemption left them no choice but to homeschool their three school-aged children, scaling back their freelance business and incurring added expenses for curriculum and enrichment—all while knowing dozens of other families face similar hardships. [REDACTED] homeschooling mom and U.S. Air Force veteran, chose this path after Connecticut's abusive COVID policies closed schools and stripped away religious exemptions. While her son [REDACTED] thrives in homeschooling, free from mandated vaccines and secular ideologies, she emphasizes that many families lack the resources to choose homeschooling, leaving their children without access to equal educational opportunities.

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children in these states are barred from public, private, and faith-based schools over their families' religious objections, will these hearings address this injustice? I can't imagine a greater threat to religious liberty in education than policies that exclude children from school entirely. With the school year approaching and significant public comments already submitted, this issue demands immediate attention.

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Thank you for your commitment to protecting religious liberty. I look forward to your response clarifying the timeline and opportunities to address this critical matter.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell

From: Patty <[REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request to Testify – September 8 Religious Liberty Commission Hearing

Date: Wed, 16 Jul 2025 17:00:23 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Testimony_of_Patricia_Piedra.pdf

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is Patricia [REDACTED] and I am a Catholic mother from New York. I am writing to respectfully request the opportunity to testify in person at the Commission's upcoming hearing on September 8 in Washington, D.C.

My family has been directly impacted by the loss of religious exemption protections. I would be honored to share our story, which reflects six years of struggle, sacrifice, and unwavering faith in the face of injustice.

Please advise me on the next steps to confirm my participation as a witness. I have included my full written testimony below for your review.

With deep gratitude and respect,

Patricia [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII

Testimony of Patricia [REDACTED]

Submitted to the Religious Liberty Commission

For the September 8th Hearing in Washington, D.C.

Dear Honorable Members of the Commission,

Thank you for the opportunity to share my testimony as a mother and a member of a Catholic family deeply impacted by the loss of religious exemption protections.

In 2019, my son [REDACTED] was attending a full-time special education school to support his speech delay. He is classified as having a speech impairment, and due to that delay, he also struggled with emotional regulation [REDACTED] didn't begin speaking until he was 3 years old. We began advocating for help when he was just 2, but because he was bright and met other developmental milestones, we were told he didn't qualify. It wasn't until he turned 3 and underwent speech-focused evaluations that it became undeniably clear — he could not speak.

I fought for him to be accepted into that special education school because by that September — at just 4.5 years old — he was supposed to begin kindergarten. [REDACTED] worked diligently for over a year and a half. Then one day, he could no longer attend. Why? Because of our religious faith. His religious exemption was taken away — and with it, the essential services that helped him thrive.

That summer, I worked tirelessly to find him private support, incurring out-of-pocket costs to ensure he was ready for kindergarten, hoping and praying that the religious exemption law would be reversed [REDACTED] was enrolled in public school. That September, he proudly went in for his first day — and two weeks later, he was removed. Again, not because of academics, but because of our religious beliefs.

Now 10 years old and entering the 6th grade, [REDACTED] has never had the opportunity to attend school or participate in school activities — not because we failed to meet educational standards, but because our family chose to follow our Catholic faith and conscience.

For the past six years, our family has lived in exclusion and isolation. As a single full-time working mother in New York, the cost of living while raising and homeschooling my son has been unbearable. We live paycheck to paycheck to provide for his care, homeschool curriculum, and any social opportunities I can find for him. I don't have a single day off — on my scheduled days off from work, I homeschool. On workdays, I teach before I clock in. I never have time for myself because every moment is spent ensuring that [REDACTED] academic and emotional needs are met.

I also work as an operations manager for a large company, overseeing more than 250 employees across multiple departments. The intense demands of this position — on top of raising and homeschooling my son without school access — have taken a serious toll on my health. I've developed an autoimmune condition that flares with extreme stress. In January, I had to take a three-month leave of absence to focus on my health and [REDACTED] well-being. This is not sustainable.

[REDACTED] has missed out on key milestones that most children enjoy — kindergarten graduation, moving-up ceremonies, and now the transition to middle school. The only time he experienced a joyful rite of passage was when he received the sacraments of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. That day gave him a sense of pride, dignity, and inclusion — something school was supposed to offer, but never could.

As most parents of children with IEPs know, homeschooling under these circumstances has been far from easy — but we did it. We chose faith over fear. We adapted. And we refused to let the world devour us.

For the past 10 years, my mother — who is now nearing 80 — has selflessly helped raise [REDACTED]. She devotes over 42 hours each week driving him to services and providing vital support. Her dedication has made it possible for me to work and hold our life together. But I now live with a deep and growing fear: what will happen when she is no longer here? What will become of us? My son will not only lose his beloved grandmother — we will lose the only lifeline that's allowed us to survive this burden. That fear keeps me up at night.

This has not been a normal childhood for my son. He's missed out on friendships, field trips, group learning, and so much more — all because of our sincere religious convictions.

We live by the teachings of the Catholic Church, which call us to live in truth, protect the sanctity of life and family, and honor God above all. As it says in Romans 5:3–5:

“We rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts.”

That verse reflects the very heart of why I'm testifying. I'm here not only for my son — but for all the families who have been silenced, pushed aside, or punished for holding fast to their faith.

I respectfully urge the Commission to act with courage and compassion — to restore religious liberty in education and ensure that no parent is ever again forced to choose between their child's future and their conscience.

I would be honored to testify in person on September 8th in Washington, D.C. Please advise on next steps to confirm my participation.

With deep gratitude and unwavering faith,



Patricia [REDACTED]

Catholic Mother & Advocate for Religious Liberty

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] PII

[REDACTED] PII

From: Jacob Dell <[REDACTED]>

To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Subject: Urgent: Investigate National Threat of Law-Breaking Churches

Date: Sun, 29 Jun 2025 20:06:31 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Cover_Letter_to_Attorney_General_William_Tong.pdf;
Cover_Letter_to_Attorney_General_Pam_Bondi.pdf;
Cover_Letter_to_RLC_Chairman_Dan_Patrick.pdf;
TRANS_PASTORS_Actions_Tied_to_Teens_Tragic_Suicide_A_Mothers_Plea_Without_Consent_Part_2.pdf;
Sermon_Transcript_Regime_Change_Fighting_with_Faith_not_Fire_First_Cong._Ch_Woodbury_29JUN2025.pdf;
WITHOUT_CONSENT_Part_1_Connecticut_Pastor_Youth_Director_Secretly_Push_Kids_to_Gender_Transition.pdf

Dear RLC Chairman Patrick:

Please see the attached letter and referenced items therein regarding the matter in the subject line of this email.

The Rev. Jacob W. [REDACTED] Pastor
The First Congregational Church of Woodbury

[REDACTED]
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Website: <http://www.firstchurchwoodbury.org/>
Sermons: <https://jwdell.substack.com/>

I do not solicit money by email or text. E-mails or texts, supposedly from me, soliciting money or asking you to buy gift cards for someone in need, are a scam. Look carefully at the email address from any email that purports to be from me.

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

The First Congregational Church
AND THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY OF WOODBURY

[REDACTED]

THE REV. JACOB W. DELL, PASTOR

June 29, 2025

To: The Honorable William Tong
Attorney General of Connecticut
Office of the Attorney General
165 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Cc: The Honorable Pam Bondi, United States Attorney General; Religious Liberty Commission

Subject: Urgent: Enforce Constitution Against Law-Breaking Churches

Dear Attorney General Tong:

As pastor of The First Congregational Church of Woodbury, I urgently request enforcement of Article First, Section 3 of the Connecticut Constitution to stop law-breaking churches threatening true religious liberty.

Enclosed are my sermon transcript, “Regime Change: Fighting with Faith, Not Fire,” preached today, June 29, 2025, and two Project Veritas video transcripts exposing a Hartford-area pastor, Reverend [REDACTED], providing a minor with a chest binder—a device linked to physical and psychological harm—without parental consent, and contributing to a teen’s suicide by encouraging gender-affirming care against parental wishes.

These churches’ unlawful acts, like counterfeit currency, devalue law-abiding congregations’ worship, damaging their reputation and social and spiritual capital.

This crisis demands action, as falling church attendance shows. The Constitution’s remedy—“The exercise... of worship... shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness”—empowers you to investigate these churches and halt their practices.

I also urge Attorney General Pam Bondi and the Religious Liberty Commission to probe these national threats to religious liberty, which harm law-abiding churches and the communities they serve.

You must act now to enforce our Constitution and end this misrepresentation of faith, protecting Connecticut's law-abiding churches.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell, Pastor
The First Congregational Church of Woodbury
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Enclosures: Sermon Transcript; Project Veritas Video Transcripts (Parts 1 and 2)

The First Congregational Church
AND THE FIRST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH OF WOODBURY

THE REV. JACOB W. DELL, PASTOR

June 29, 2025

To: The Honorable Pam Bondi
United States Attorney General
U.S. Department of Justice
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20530-0001

Cc: Religious Liberty Commission

Subject: Urgent: Investigate National Threat of Law-Breaking Churches

Dear Attorney General Bondi:

As pastor of The First Congregational Church of Woodbury, I urgently request your investigation into law-breaking churches posing national threats to religious liberty, as detailed in the enclosed letter to Connecticut Attorney General William Tong, my sermon transcript, "Regime Change: Fighting with Faith, Not Fire" (June 29, 2025), and two Project Veritas video transcripts.

The videos expose a Hartford-area pastor providing a minor with a chest binder without parental consent and contributing to a teen's suicide by encouraging gender-affirming care against parental wishes. These unlawful acts, like counterfeit currency, devalue law-abiding congregations' worship, damaging their reputation and social and spiritual capital.

Connecticut's Constitution (Article First, Section 3) offers a remedy against such licentiousness, but these acts harm communities nationwide, as falling church attendance shows. I urge you and the Religious Liberty Commission to investigate, halting practices that undermine true religious liberty.

Please act swiftly to protect law-abiding churches. I am available for discussion at the contact information below.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell, Pastor
The First Congregational Church of Woodbury
Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Enclosures: Letter to Attorney General William Tong; Sermon Transcript; Project Veritas Video Transcripts (Parts 1 and 2)

The First Congregational Church
AND THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY OF WOODBURY

THE REV. JACOB W. DELL, PASTOR

June 29, 2025

To: The Honorable Dan Patrick
Chair, Religious Liberty Commission
Office of the Lieutenant Governor
P.O. Box 12068
Austin, TX 78711
Email: [REDACTED]

Cc: The Honorable Pam Bondi, United States Attorney General; The Honorable William Tong,
Attorney General of Connecticut

Subject: Urgent: Investigate National Threat of Law-Breaking Churches

Dear Chairman Patrick:

As pastor of The First Congregational Church of Woodbury, I attended the Religious Liberty Commission's first meeting in Washington, DC on June 16, 2025, and plan to join tomorrow's call and the second meeting on September 8, 2025. I urgently request the Commission's investigation into law-breaking churches posing national threats to religious liberty, as detailed in the enclosed letters to Attorneys General Pam Bondi and William Tong, my sermon transcript, "Regime Change: Fighting with Faith, Not Fire" (June 29, 2025), and two Project Veritas video transcripts.

The videos expose a Hartford-area pastor providing a minor with a chest binder without parental consent and contributing to a teen's suicide by encouraging gender-affirming care against parental wishes. These unlawful acts, like counterfeit currency, devalue law-abiding congregations' worship, damaging their reputation and social and spiritual capital.

Connecticut's Constitution offers a remedy against such licentiousness, but these acts harm communities nationwide, as falling church attendance shows. Please investigate to halt practices undermining true religious liberty.

Act swiftly to protect law-abiding churches. I am available for discussion at the contact information below.

Sincerely,

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell, Pastor
The First Congregational Church of Woodbury
Mobile: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]

Enclosures: Letters to Attorneys General Pam Bondi and William Tong; Sermon Transcript;
Project Veritas Video Transcripts (Parts 1 and 2)

██████████ (Mother) (00:00):

I just want to say if it was not ██████████ if he did not put do badge between me and my daughter, my daughter was still alive. She would be still alive. I heard about Pastor ██████████ from DCF Social worker. ██████████ filed a complaint against me after he saw my daughter only once for emotional abuse because I was refusing to [00:00:30] affirm her gender identity due to my Muslim beliefs. Well, I'm not the problem. I'm the mother who tried to save her child by judging from the papers which I received from DCF, I believe ██████████ encouraged my daughter not to have any contact. It's pretty scary to have your child in elementary school and middle school and [00:01:00] high school, and even in college because grooms are everywhere and now we know they're in church as well.

(01:17):

My name is ██████████ and I would like to share the story of my daughter ██████████ and I'll start my story, how it started, how [00:01:30] ██████████ filed the complaint against me by being abusive mother. On October 27th, 2023, I was driving to Ride University in New Jersey. It was a family weekend in the campus and it meant to be a surprise visit for my daughter. I grabbed several plates of her favorite biani, got Biani from Pakistani store, and I also had sample Ignite Seeds, huge container, [00:02:00] just the way she liked it and sample snacks. I saw so many parents having fun with their kids, and I was looking forward to having the same thing with my daughter her, but she took forever to open the door, and when she did, it was a stranger standing in front of my eyes. No. Hi mom. No hug, no kiss. So distant. Just a question. What [00:02:30] I doing here?

(02:32):

When I agreed for ██████████ to study in out-of-state school, we had an agreement that she would be focused only on education, not on gender identity, but what I saw on that day, it was a child fully consumed by gender ideology. Somebody introduced her to Reverend ██████████ a pastor from Metropolitan [00:03:00] Community Church in Hartford. Apparently my daughter sent him an email and he saw her only once. And after that meeting, he made up his mind that I'm not fit as a parent. He filed a complaint against me to Department of Children and Families. His claim I was emotionally abusive towards my daughter for not affirming [00:03:30] her male gender identity because of my Muslim's beliefs. Well, I'm a Muslim, all right, but thus Christianity has a statement that kids could be born in. Wrong bodies. Can this so-called pastor, show me the citation and Bible about that.

(03:58):

I thought in [00:04:00] faith, it doesn't matter. Christianity or Islam, kids are taught to love and respect their parents. They're not taught to report to the state that their parents don't believe that their bodies are wrong. ██████████ accused me that I forced my daughter to wear female clothes back in 2022. When she came out to us as transgender, I started [00:04:30] to look for what to do, and the only option which I found online was just the affirmation. That's what internet told me, that I had to affirm, advise my daughter would commit suicide. So we went along with pronouns, legally changed her name from ██████████ to ██████████. She cut her hair, she dyed it the way she wanted. She had male clothing. She had her room painted, and in fact, one of the walls [00:05:00] was painted as a bright flag. But what we noticed, the more I affirmed, the more she looked for validation. And if anyone misgendered her, even accidentally in that case, she would have a meltdown.

(05:22):

And at that particular time, I discovered her TikTok account, and in one of the push she had, she posted that she did not want to leave. [00:05:30] So what was the point of that affirmation? What was the point of using male pronouns if she still didn't want to leave? After I started to read more and dig more into that, I found that we made a huge mistake. So I stopped affirming her, but went back to female

pronounce [REDACTED] accused me in so-called in-home conversion therapy just because I was showing her documentaries about potential side effects of hormonal therapy. [00:06:00] I strongly believe any parent should talk about side effects of any drug. Doesn't matter if it is testosterone, Tylenol. I call it parenting. [REDACTED] calls it an abuse. And don't forget, according to the internet, [REDACTED] is also a chaplain at [REDACTED] Pediatric Gender Program. The program which benefits from when young adults go through medical transition. [00:06:30] So was he trying to help my daughter or recruiting a new patient?

(06:39):

Reverend [REDACTED] calls himself a Christian, but I question what kind of gospel he's preaching because it's not the pastor. It's not the protector, it's just the word, a voice and the system, which tells [00:07:00] kids that their problem is their parents. Well, I'm not the problem. I'm the mother who tried to save her child. On Monday, October, 2014, I received a knock at the door of my house. Police people were standing behind it and they said, my son, [REDACTED] took his life. He was found dead [00:07:30] and his body was lying in the dorm for four days. Undiscovered at [REDACTED] in New Jersey. Thank you so much [REDACTED] for this.

(07:48):

[REDACTED] encouraged my daughter not to contact with me. I believe that by judging from the DCF papers I received, it looks like he [00:08:00] affirmed her that she could have free food and boarded college and eventually get gender affirming care, including hormones, mastectomy, and all paid by taxpayers. I just want to say if it was not [REDACTED], if he did not put the wedge between me and my daughter, my daughter was still alive, she would be still alive, and he did not just file the claim against me. [00:08:30] He destroyed the lifeline, he destroyed the family. And I'll never forget it.

The First Congregational Church
AND THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY OF WOODBURY

THE REV. JACOB W. DELL, PASTOR

Regime Change: Fighting with Faith, Not Fire

Preached on June 29, 2025, at First Congregational Church, Woodbury, Connecticut

Introduction: Facing a World and Local Crisis

Well, last week I got up here and we were afraid. I know you asked me to pray for the situation in Iran and the political situation, the instability in the world.

This past week, the word regime, the phrase, I should say, regime change got thrown around a lot. It dominated the headlines.

Last Sunday, we stood on the brink of another war in the Mideast, which we seem to have walked back from. But many are still calling for regime change. They're using that word in Iran or elsewhere.

Meanwhile, regime change is hitting home here. Maybe it's already taken place in its entirety.

Here in Connecticut, an appalling video released last week by Project Veritas shows a regime change underway, undermining parental rule and rights. The video exposed how easy it is for underage children to access gender affirming support networks.

Now, this is nothing new. But for me, what was most appalling about the video and what was most upsetting was the revelation that a Connecticut pastor was involved.

In the video, a transgender life coach tells an undercover reporter who is posing as an underage girl, he says,

Between you and me, I can't know if the parents don't know. Wink, wink, nudge, nudge. We hand out free, and I'm not going to tell you what he said, but we hand them out. They're free. They're meant for 18 and over, but we slip one to Reverend so-and-so and see what he does. You know what I'm saying?

That's a direct quote, and you can watch the video for yourself. I'll include the link in the sermon when I send it out. It's on YouTube.

And I'll come back to this unfortunate pastor and what I think should be done. But first, I want you to understand what's happening, because this is not the free exercise of religion.

This is subversion of religion by a hostile actor, someone opposed to the standing order of churches and towns in Connecticut, some of whose names you can see right around here.

These were all standing order churches established from this one, ecclesiastical societies like our own, town and church united.

The old Bible-based ways, God's truth, as it was preached in our churches and lived in our towns, is under attack and we must fight back.

The Question: Restoring the Ancient Order

Now, the question I want to answer in this sermon is, how do we restore the ancient order, that ancient church and civic order?

And now, I'm not talking about restoring an established church or taxing the townsfolk of Woodbury for my salary. That's what you used to do, but I'm not saying go back and do it.

I'm asking, how do we put things right with a regime change of our own? We've been losing this fight for over a century with churches and towns mostly overtaken.

We've lived through a regime change that many of us never asked for.

Biblical Example: God's Regime Change in Israel

Now, let's see how God's regime change played out in old Israel in today's reading from 1 Kings.

Elijah, the prophet, is at the end of his ministry or nearing the end of it, and he's planning for succession.

And he commissions, by the order of God, he commissions Elisha to continue his holy war against the false god Baal and the Israelite kings who have been serving and worshiping Baal instead of Jehovah.

And verses 15 and 16 describe the coming regime change commanded by God and given to Elijah to put into effect. I'll read them to you again.

And the Lord said to him, go, return on your way to the wilderness of Damascus.
And when you arrive, you shall anoint Hazael to be king over Syria. And Jehu, the

son of Nimshi, you shall anoint to be king over Israel. And Elisha, the son of Shaphat, of Abelmeholah, you shall anoint to be prophet in your place.

What is going on here? The prophet Elijah at the command of God is anointing men for church and for state.

These verses describe regime change, both in the civil order and in the church. And if you need any biblical evidence that kings and rulers, prophets and priests are chosen by God, here is your proof text.

Verses 20 and 21 recount the cost of this regime change to Elisha personally. Elisha has been anointed the prophet. He's in the role of the church here.

This is what Elisha does. It says,

And he left the oxen and he ran after Elijah and said, let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you. And he said to him, go back, for what have I done to you? And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen and slew them and boiled their flesh with the yokes of the oxen and gave it to the people and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elijah and ministered to him.

So what is the point of that? These sacrifice texts, they often go over our heads, don't they? I remember preaching on that back in Lent.

Well, what's going on here is it's showing wealth. If you have 12 yokes of oxen, that means you've got 24 oxen, right? And he sacrifices them. He destroys them.

You don't do that unless you've got them, unless they're yours to do it with. That's a lot of money. It's a big sacrifice.

It would be like if you had 24 Teslas and you lit them all on fire, right? To prove that money was no object to you, that you will sacrifice whatever it takes to fulfill this commission.

That's the extravagance of this. He does it to show that he's ready to sacrifice his old life and leave it behind.

He's making a vow. And vows, as we know, use symbols. Wedding rings, right? What do they symbolize? They symbolize unity and an unbreakable bond.

So the sacrifice of oxen acknowledges the cost of waging a spiritual and material war to bring regime change to ancient Israel.

Now, Elisha knows that he is getting himself... He knows what he's getting himself into.

In the previous chapter, in 1 Kings 18, verse 40, Elijah killed the prophets of Baal. He killed them. This is a holy war. He's been called to fight.

And with real killing and real dying, there's no fake fighting in the Old Testament. Elijah, the prophet of Jehovah, slew the prophets of Baal, the false prophets.

Now, Elisha knows becoming a prophet requires sacrifice, and so he must give up his former life.

And Elisha knows that he is called to fight a spiritual war against the false god Baal. But Elisha also knows that it means he must fight a physical war as well.

That's something in the Old Testament. That's a difference between the Old and the New Testament. I'm going to come to that.

But in the Old Testament, there's a physical war going on as well. And what do you need? What does any nation need to fight a war? Well, it needs a war chest. It needs money. It's why you get taxed.

He needs a war chest to do that. And Elisha spends his wealth or shows that he's willing to spend his wealth for this fight.

So that's what the sacrifice of 24 oxen means. He's ready to cover the cost, both spiritually and materially, of this war himself.

And so Elijah, he takes his mantle. He throws it over Elisha and recruits him to the Lord's side in this revolution.

Symbolic Continuity: The Mantle of Responsibility

Last week, I didn't wear the mantle because it was so hot. But it's important symbolically, I think, to keep these things, to keep the continuity here.

There's a reason to wear a black robe in the pulpit. This is one of them, to show where the mantle has landed.

Elijah's mantle being cast on Elisha lands on me, lands on you.

We sang in the hymn this morning, anoint them prophets, anoint them priests, anoint them kings. That's not just me. All of you, this mantle has fallen on.

[He] throws his mantle over Elisha and recruits him to join the Lord's side in this revolution.

And Elijah has been waging a war against idol worship in Israel and the licentiousness it breeds. Now, remember that word, licentiousness, because I'm going to come back to it.

There are risks involved when attempting to change a corrupt regime.

If we're going to throw off a corrupt yoke, if we're going to restore something like the ancient standing order of Connecticut, then we must be prepared to cover the cost.

But we're not going to war, at least not that kind of war. God is not asking us to sacrifice our wealth to build an army.

He may be asking us to sacrifice our wealth but not to build an army with machine guns and tanks. Not that kind.

Jesus' Teaching: A Spiritual Fight

Elisha was called to fight. In 1 Kings 19, verse 17, it says,

And him who escapes the sword of Hazael shall Jehu slay, and him who escapes the sword of Jehu shall Elisha slay.

What does that mean? The state is supposed to do the fighting first, but if all else fails, then the prophet must take up the sword.

But that is not what Jesus authorizes us to do. Jesus makes it clear that he doesn't want his followers to wield the sword to change the regime.

Elisha fought a holy war, but Jesus shows us a different way in Luke's gospel. The fight we're asked to join is a spiritual fight.

Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem, and he's taking a shortcut through Samaria. There's hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans.

You could understand why, because about a century before, the Jews had gone up into Samaria and destroyed their temple, destroyed their place of worship.

They marched on their villages and burned them and burned their temple.

So when the Samaritan townsfolk realized that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem, presumably to worship in the Jewish temple there, they refused their hospitality. There's still bad blood.

So that's the context. That's the context for the otherwise odd question the disciples asked Jesus in Luke 9, verse 54.

Lord, do you want us to bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?

Wasn't such a strange question when the armies of Judea, the Jewish armies had gone up there before and done the same thing.

Luke 9, verse 55 tells us that Jesus rebukes them, and at verse 56, he tells us that they went on to another village.

Now, I wish Bill were here today. He's not, so you're going to have to tell him, because here's where your King James Bible readers have an advantage.

It's the King James version of the Bible, as well as the [other versions] which has an extra verse in here, an extra part of verse 56.

If you're looking at your Revised Standard Version in the pew, you're going to find it in the footnote. King James puts it right up there front and center in the text where it belongs.

It's important. It's part of the theme of this whole lesson today.

After they say, do you want us to call down fire? And Jesus rebukes them and they go on to another village. There's another part of that verse.

The rest of verse 56 says, has Jesus saying,

You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

You see it in the footnote there? Go back and look for it.

You do not know, Jesus says, what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

I think the missing part of the verse in our modern translations is important for two reasons.

First, it explains why Jesus rebukes his disciples. Second, it characterizes the nature of the fight.

This is a spiritual fight, not a physical one. And it's the fight we're called to fight today.

Spiritual Weapons: Impacting the Physical World

Now don't misunderstand this. Just because a fight is spiritual does not mean it will have no physical effects.

Last week we read in Luke chapter eight about the Gerasene demoniac, a man possessed by a legion of demons.

We also read that he went about naked, that he lived in the tombs and often had to be restrained by chains because the demons seized him.

So what does that tell you? It tells us two things.

The man's very real, his physical ailments were caused by his spiritual condition.

The spiritual realm can and does act on the material realm. The body is a mirror to the soul, not just our individual souls, but the soul of a nation.

It also tells us that the battle for regime change must be fought with spiritual weapons.

This is our fight in Connecticut, spiritual, not physical. We're fighting against the subversion of our churches.

And Jesus does not authorize the use of any other kind of weapon. He says,

For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Now, this isn't a cope. The weapons of the Spirit have greater physical effect, not less.

Destroy one Samaritan town with fire from heaven, and what have you done? You've destroyed one Samaritan town.

And you've destroyed the lives of the men who dwell there.

But if you use spiritual weapons against the Samaritans, what have you done? Well, you've converted them.

Jesus didn't destroy the Samaritans. He had a better plan, as we see in Acts 8.

Luke, the author of both today's gospel and of Acts, he holds the story of the Samaritan's conversion for Acts chapter 8.

That's because Jesus has yet to unleash the most potent spiritual weapon of all, the cross.

Luke chapter 9 verse 51 tells us when the days drew near for Jesus to be received up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem.

Now received up, we know how the story goes, but that's a mighty foreshadowing there.

A mighty foreshadowing of his being raised up on the cross where he draws all men to himself, but also of his being raised up into heaven at the ascension where he reigns from on high.

This is why the Samaritan villagers reject him because he's going to Jerusalem and they're still being territorial about where people worship.

It's also why they will come to accept him later. The power of the cross will convert them.

When they see what this man has done for them, when they see how he has bled out for them, for their sins, so that they no longer stand condemned for being a perverse and perverted people, but stand righteous, clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ before the throne of God, when they see that, that is when they are converted.

In Acts chapter 8, verses 3 through 8, we read,

But Saul was ravaging the church and entering house after house. He dragged off men and women and committed them to prison.

So let me stop to point out here what Saul is doing. Later, we know him as Paul. What is he doing?

He's using a physical weapon against the church. He's trying to destroy the church with brute force.

But the church has a spiritual weapon at her disposal, the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And Paul's persecution scatters the church, which causes what? The church to fail? No, it causes it to grow.

It causes Philip to go to Samaria, where he preaches the gospel of Christ crucified.

At verse 4, Luke says,

Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

Philip went down to a city of Samaria. Now, you know them. We know them already from the earlier story.

It's the same people, the villagers who rejected Jesus. The Samaritans are the people that the disciples wanted to destroy with heavenly fire because they refused hospitality to Jesus and his disciples.

But Jesus said,

You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

Philip went down, Luke continues in Acts, Philip went down to a city of Samaria and proclaimed to them Christ.

And the multitudes with one accord gave heed to what was said by Philip when they heard him and saw the signs which he did for unclean spirits.

You see, this is a spiritual war. For unclean spirits came out of many who were possessed, crying with a loud voice, and many who were paralyzed or lame.

You see how the spiritual affects the material, the physical.

And many who were paralyzed or lame were healed.

And now here's the point I want you to remember from this. So there was much joy in that city. There was much joy in that city.

That's the regime change we need, not destruction, but salvation.

Application: Seeking Joy, Not Destruction

Because I want to see much joy in Connecticut. I don't want to see it destroyed.

I want to see joy in Bethlehem and Roxbury. Well, Woodbury's still part of us, but they count.

And South Britain and Southbury and Judea. We're Washington now.

I want to see joy in those cities, those towns. I don't want to see us destroyed. I don't want to call down fire.

And I don't want, getting back to the beginning of this sermon, I don't want the pastor in that video as perverse as he's behaving. I don't want to see him destroyed either.

I want to see him sitting at the feet of Jesus clothed and in his right mind, just like the Gerasene demoniac from Luke chapter 8, verse 35.

Would you pray for that? Would you pray for the conversion of these godless ministers?

So how do we bring God's regime change today? We, the church, are here right now to fight for Christ with his spiritual weapons.

And we see a lot of would-be recruits in today's gospel reading. They, one by one, they pass by the recruiting agent, and they have an excuse for why they won't join.

The recruiting agent happens to be Jesus. Can you imagine that? We all say we want to see him, and here he is.

I think the pastor that I'm talking about from this video, he might be one of those, might be like one of those who finds a reason not to join.

The reason none of these would-be recruits want to join is because they're dodging the true cost of discipleship.

They don't want to sacrifice their oxen or whatever it is, their reputation.

You know, if you walk down the street, you don't like to get cursed. I mean, people turn away from me when I walk down the street, right?

People don't want that. People don't want the ostracization. They don't want the rejection.

They don't want to lose their job, their reputation. They want peace at the family dinner table.

I get it. I get it, okay? But that's the sacrifice of oxen you guys are called to make, right?

I will follow you wherever you go. This is the kind of man who maybe sees the ordained ministry as a comfortable sinecure, one that requires little work and not much sacrifice.

I have to think that a lot of these ministers who are saying this nonsense, if you cut off their salaries, which are paid for by endowments, if you cut those endowments off and cut off their salaries, I'll bet you they would find something else to say real quick.

To this man, Jesus says,

Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.

In other words, you don't get a parsonage.

In verse 59, another would-be disciple says,

Lord, let me go first and bury my father,

to which Jesus replies,

Leave the dead to bury the dead. But as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God.

Old habits, especially sinful ones, die hard. A lack of courage is a spiritual condition.

But courage is a spiritual weapon that God gives us to fight for his kingdom.

In verse 61, another would-be disciple says,

I will follow you, Lord, but first let me say farewell to those at home.

To which Jesus says,

No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God.

Now, this example, these examples, I think, or especially this last one, would convict many a would-be minister, including myself at an earlier point in my career.

By God's grace, I was stripped of those sinecures and those endowments.

We discern, those of us who go into the ministry, those of us who desire to wear the black robe, those of us who think that when Elijah's mantle is cast over us that we get to take the best seats in the place, right?

I remember I would go out sometimes with my collar on and somebody would say, well, the meal's been paid for you, Father.

I mean, that's generous. I'm not begrudging the person who did it and the act of kindness that they gave me there, but come on.

We discern a call to preach God's kingdom. We answer it, but in the pulpit, our words often fall short.

And I think that may describe the unfortunate pastor in the Project Veritas video.

I'd like to think somewhere, somewhere along the way, some point in his life, his heart was truly moved, that God spoke to him, that he discerned a call.

But then when he got into it, when the mantle fell on his shoulders, the weight was too heavy, probably because he was trying to carry it by himself.

And his words have fallen short ever since.

The Power of God's Word: A Spiritual Weapon

The word of God is a powerful spiritual weapon and preachers are called to wield it.

On one of the Sundays leading up to Pentecost, we read from John chapter 14, verse 26,

But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.

Well, we're now in the season of Pentecost. Now is the time of remembering all the things that he said to us.

We live with the benefit of the Counselor's counsel. And not only that, we live with over 2,000 years of this benefit.

We've had the counsel of the Holy Spirit for millennia now. And you know what? It's reflected in our laws.

It's reflected in the accumulated body of Christian law. In our own tradition, that's the Anglo-Saxon common law tradition.

The bedrock, the bedrock on which the Constitution State's constitution still stands today.

Call to Action: Applying God's Law in Connecticut

Now, this is where it's going to hit home for us in Connecticut.

I invited members, elected representatives, people to come here, candidates to come here. I don't see any of them.

I had dinner on Friday evening with a senator. He urged me to preach boldly from the pulpit.

I urged him to come to church. Because if I'm going to preach boldly from the pulpit, then I need the politicians to take up the slack and I don't see them. Where are they?

Let me make a final application of today's reading that may startle you. Psalm 19, verse 7 says,

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. The testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple.

The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. Remember I said that was our weapon, our primary weapon, conversion?

It's a spiritual weapon. I don't want to see tanks. I don't want to see F-35s. I don't want B-52s.

I want the law of the Lord because it's perfect. It converts the soul.

Now from foreign wars to our own churches, God's law restores order.

The law word of God is a spiritual weapon that Christians habitually underutilize. We never use this weapon.

We are quick to pray. We are eager to study the Bible. We're eager to evangelize, to feed the poor, to clothe the naked.

And I'm going to go out on a limb and say that you would probably rather pay 10% a tithe than get serious about applying God's law to affect a regime change.

Yet it is the tool that God gave us to wield, to exercise dominion over the earth. He gave us this dominion in Genesis chapter 1.

And I believe that there is a legal constitutional remedy for these unfortunate churches, the kind that are being described in this Project Veritas video, the kind that are encouraging young children to change their sex.

I believe that there is a constitutional remedy to put these churches out of business.

I believe that churches are called to wield this spiritual weapon, not to destroy them, but to convert them because the law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul.

Our forefathers came to these shores to practice their religion freely.

And as I preached last week, they knew their right to worship was grounded in their duty to worship.

It was not a paper right or a privilege granted to them by the state.

They also knew that the right to worship, especially when it is divorced from the duty to worship, can result in worship that is corrupt.

And that is where we are today. Hence, our forefathers, wisely guided by the promised Counselor, the Holy Spirit, wrote this clause into the 1818 Constitution, which was preserved in our current Constitution from 1965, Article I, Section 3.

This is what it says in your Connecticut Constitution. It says,

The exercise and enjoyment of religious profession and worship without discrimination shall forever be free to all persons in this state, provided that the right hereby declared and established shall not be so construed as to excuse acts of licentiousness.

I said I would come back to that word. Licentiousness is defined as lacking legal or moral restraints, especially as disregarding sexual restraints.

It also means marked by disregard for strict rules of correctness.

Any pastor helping minors break the law is surely engaged in licentiousness.

Any church that knowingly supports such a pastor aids and abets him. Both should be challenged under the state constitution.

The free exercise of religion clause does not excuse what they are doing.

If this clause wasn't written for such a time as this, it'd be better if it hadn't been written at all.

We could say we have no obligation to act, no spiritual weapon to wield.

But it was written by wise and Christian men, men from Bethlehem and Roxbury and Woodbury North and South Britain and Southbury and Judea and from Woodbury North.

It was written, and it now imposes a duty on the citizens, especially the Christian citizens of this state, to apply the law.

I have preached before that we are kings and priests. We sang that in the hymn this morning.

We do not rule. We do not rule by calling down fire from heaven.

We rule by applying the law of the Lord, the perfect law, the converting law.

There will be a cost to the disciples who enlist in this fight. This is why Jesus had trouble gaining new recruits.

But if we refuse to put our hand to the plow, if we refuse to do that, we have to ask ourselves, do we really love God and our neighbor?

Paul writes in today's reading from Galatians 5, verse 14,

For the whole law is fulfilled in one word, You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

Well, you know what? That pastor in that video is my neighbor, and I love him enough to call him out, and I love him enough to ask for the state to put an end to his nonsense.

We must apply the law of love, not as some Christians mistakenly think, out of a duty to be nice.

That is the enemy of your religion, niceness, or to go along to get along.

I lived 15 years in Babylonian captivity, going along to get along, that was my ministry, but to proclaim the kingdom of God without excusing blatant acts of licentiousness.

That is how we apply the law of love, not by being nice, not by going along to get along, but to proclaim the kingdom of God without excusing blatant acts of licentiousness.

This is how we will change the regime and restore a godly order to the towns and churches of Connecticut.

So I call upon the Attorney General of this state, and I will forward a copy of this sermon with a cover letter to him, William Tong.

I call upon him to investigate the church in this Project Veritas video and any other churches like it in this state operating an open violation of our Constitution.

And I also call upon the United States Attorney General, Pam Bondi, and the Religious Liberty Task Force to investigate.

When licentious acts masquerade as religious observance, and so-called churches give cover for these acts, they destroy the free exercise of true religion.

There is no right to the free exercise of sin.

And when sin and licentiousness are promoted by the church, the state is constitutionally bound to act.

It is time for Connecticut's churches to defend their ancient rights and petition the state to end this gross misrepresentation of faith in our state.

Closing Prayer

Let us pray. Almighty God, you have built your church upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone.

Grant us so to be joined together in unity of spirit by their teaching, that we may be made a holy temple, acceptable to you, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.

Narrator (00:00):

A mother's tip to Project Veritas sparked an investigation into a network of transgender activists, falsely accused of abuse. After her daughter had one meeting with Reverend [REDACTED], she feared for others. [REDACTED] a transgender pastor collaborates with transgender life coach [REDACTED] to advocate for transgender youth in Connecticut through a series of meetings with the pair project Veritas probes. How far some activists [00:00:30] may go to promote transgender transitions for children without parental consent

[REDACTED] (00:38):

Between me and you. And this is not being recorded. I can't know that They don't know. You have what I'm saying? Wink win. I don't know how many people we should share that the parents don't know. Do you have a binder? Do you bind? Do you bind your chest? Because we give away free binders. They're supposed to be for 18 plus because legally that's what we have to do. But we can always give one to Reverend Miller, [00:01:00] whatever he does with his, none my business. You what I'm saying?

Unknown Speaker (01:04):

So it's a compression. This is the chest because it's a binder. I mean, it'd be one thing if we're talking blue block, which I hope we will be. He

[REDACTED] (01:14):

Needs to move forward with this transition. I'm here now to lay your life, to protect you and to help you move forward. Okay. Trust. I have helped thousands of kids.

Narrator (01:30):

[00:01:30] During an initial call, a 12-year-old girl is introduced to Reverend Miller by a Project Veritas journalist. She discusses her struggles with gaining parental acceptance for her chosen name and male identity. Justin?

Journalist (01:46):

Justin was assigned female at birth, but Justin is a referred, wants to be referred to as a male. I was thinking that you would be the perfect person to talk to about this.

"Justin" (01:57):

I identify as a boy, wanted [00:02:00] to be a boy. That's how I feel inside. But my parents, they don't support me and I'm trying to find out how I can really become my true self.

[REDACTED] (02:12):

Okay. Alright. So for people that have never experienced this, like your parents, the first answer or the first reaction can often be you're not and not believe you.

"Justin" (02:27):

Are there any groups for kids that are kind of like [00:02:30] secret?

[REDACTED] (02:30):

We have a circus program, but it's for kids, so it's like, I think, how old are you? 12. 12? Yeah. So you're right in the perfect age. So we don't tell anybody. No. Well, yes. They'll never know. We don't tell anybody where these are being held. There's one, every other week is in Middletown and every other week is in New Haven. Like I said, I have somebody who's awesome, [00:03:00] absolutely awesome to talk to them and who will talk to you too, Justin, about how you're feeling, what you need and all that. But his name is Tony.

Journalist ([03:11](#)):

My nephew, Justin, 12 years old.

[REDACTED] ([03:15](#)):

Hey

Tony Ferraiolo ([03:15](#)):

Justin.

Journalist ([03:15](#)):

He's having a really hard time with everything going on, the transition. And I spoke with Pastor Aaron and he recommended that we reach out to you.

[REDACTED] ([03:29](#)):

Where are the parents and [00:03:30] what are they going through right now?

Journalist ([03:32](#)):

They just don't really, they don't believe it. They just think, well, you're born a girl, then you're a girl. They don't think that you can change.

[REDACTED] ([03:42](#)):

Yeah, guess what? We can't. I transitioned actually 20 years ago, so in 2005 I transitioned and there was no one to guide me or anything. So at that moment I started working with trans youth and their families. The first thing you would want to blockers, right? Puberty blockers,

[REDACTED] ([03:56](#)):

Yeah.

Tony Ferraiolo ([03:57](#)):

And then eventually would you want to be on testosterone?

[REDACTED] ([04:00](#)):

[00:04:00] Yep.

[REDACTED] ([04:01](#)):

How about top surgery? Have you thought about top surgery? Yes. Okay. He needs to move forward with this transition. Yeah. And is he getting his periods already?

Journalist ([04:16](#)):

No, not yet.

[REDACTED] ([04:17](#)):

Okay. Because there's no way we can sneak lockers. You can't do it. Especially nowadays, the legality and no doctor's going to touch a 12-year-old [00:04:30] without parents' consent. The youth group is, I started in 2008. I started as just a teen group and then I started an art group for kids 12 and hundred. One of the main rules of I don't like rules, guidelines of the group is do not disclose the location to anyone for safety reasons. And that's really big. Especially now, if you didn't know this is a high school, that's a farm. It's so far out there that nobody knows where it is. And I think that's safe for us between me [00:05:00] and you, and this is not being recorded. I can't know that. They don't know to put them into the group.

Journalist ([05:07](#)):

Okay.

[REDACTED] ([05:08](#)):

Hear what I'm saying? I can't say to you, take 'em, they're behind the parents' back. I can't do that. But what I can say is tell you that sometimes other families will take other kids because they're going, they're sleeping over and they're going out the next morning to an bed.

[REDACTED] ([05:27](#)):

Right?

[REDACTED] ([05:28](#)):

I'm going to leave it up to you to handle the family [00:05:30] part of it. I'm just going to make sure that Justin gets what he needs. Yeah, just bring 'em and if they say where take taking 'em to a park and taking them, whatever. That's up to you. Taking 'em out for lunch. I don't know how many people we should share that your parents don't know. They're all cool. They're all cool and they wouldn't say anything, but I just want to protect Justin because I don't want to give him the space. And then something happened and it's taken away because the parents are adamant about him not going, do you have a binder? Do you bind? Do you bind your chest? You have [00:06:00] one. Okay, because we give away free binders. Alright? They're supposed to be for 18 plus because legally that's what we have to do. But we can always give one to [REDACTED] and see what he does with it. Whatever he does with his own my business. What I'm saying.

Narrator ([06:15](#)):

Reverend Miller and Tony told our journalist they could secretly provide a breast binder to 12-year-old Justin chest binding compresses chest tissue to create a more masculine appearance for those experiencing gender dysphoria. Despite research, linking it to physical [00:06:30] and psychological risks like pain, breathing problems, and damaged breast tissue. They expressed no concern about supplying the binder to Justin without his parents' approval.

Unknown Speaker ([06:41](#)):

It was really clear. So a compression vest, it compresses the cha. I don't know if he's again, okay, so that's the timing of this. Yes. Really? Yeah, [00:07:00] of course. I'll get you an edit. Anyway,

[REDACTED] [\(07:02\)](#):

So I just want you to know, Justin, just so you know this, I was born female and I do want to tell you that when, and it's not. If you become who you are, really who you are authentically, there is a joy that I can't describe to you and that's waiting for you. People

[REDACTED] [\(07:22\)](#):

That think all they want, you know who you are and we're going to start surrounding you with people who love and honor you. And that's going to really help

[REDACTED] [\(07:30\)](#):

[00:07:30] You. This is the beginning of someone helping you, okay? And maybe several of us helping you. So we'll work together to find a way. And Justin, I want you to hear the people that care about you and love you, alright,

[REDACTED] [\(07:44\)](#):

Here now in your life to protect you and to help you move forward. Okay? Trust thousands of kids.

From: R N <[REDACTED]>

To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Liberty

Date: Wed, 18 Jun 2025 10:13:02 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_-_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Greetings Religious Liberty Commission Members:

I was recently made aware of your existence by way of a letter written by "Teachers for Choice." I have attached a copy of the letter for your reference.

Although I was not a "New York City" employee, I too know the pangs of losing employment during covid vaccine mandates and am fully aligned with the "New York Workers for Choice" request to you.

No one deserves the treatment that is bestowed upon us. Not in New York, nor anywhere in AMERICA. We all deserve the right to follow our conscience and practice our faith without coercion or retaliation from our government/employers. The implementation of the mandates was not proportionate across the board. Nor is the action, or lack thereof, to rectify what was done.

My hope is that your commission will take the initiative to put things right while we are all still here to bear witness and be redeemed.

Should you be interested in my own experience, feel free to reach out.

Wishing you fortitude in your significant new roles.

Sincerely,

Regina [REDACTED]



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

Michael Kane, Founder *Teachers for Choice*
Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*
Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*
Sophy Medina, *Bravest for Choice*
Arthur Roldan, *Cops 4 Freedom*
John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw: NY Workers for Choice Submits Public Comment to Religious Liberty Commission

Date: Tue, 17 Jun 2025 14:34:05 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

To whom it may concern,

My name is Rey [REDACTED] I am a former NYC employee who was terminated from my position as a [REDACTED], with the Office of Labor Relations, in March of 2022. I was terminated due to my refusal to accept the mandatory return to work stipulation of receiving a COVID-19 vaccination. I had filed for a religious exemption but was denied with the reason stated as being "an undue hardship on the agency."
I have endured great financial hardship since that time and currently work in the private sector making a substantial amount less than I did with the city. I had just cleared 20 years of service at the time of my termination. I have lost out on pension earnings, tenure and income. Below is a letter from Teachers for Choice.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,
Rey [REDACTED]

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: Teachers for Choice <[REDACTED] PII>

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII>

Sent: Thursday, June 12, 2025 at 01:18:39 PM EDT

Subject: NY Workers for Choice Submits Public Comment to Religious Liberty Commission

Forwarded this email? [Subscribe here](#) for more

NY Workers for Choice Submits Public Comment to Religious Liberty Commission

Please send our letter to the commission yourself. Simple instructions on how to do so in this post

MICHAEL KANE
JUN 12



READ IN APP





Today, June 12, 2025, NY Workers for Choice submitted the below letter to President Trump's Religious Liberty Commission which will be convening for the first time on Monday, June 16.

The letter details 2 major points of horrendous religious discrimination that the City of New York has perpetrated on the NYC workers who declined the COVID shot on religious grounds.

If you submitted a religious exemption for a COVID vaccine mandate in NYC, please send our letter to the following email address:

PII

Please also briefly describe your situation. Tell your name, job, agency you worked for, how many years you worked for them, and what happened to you after you submitted your religious exemption.

Below is our letter (downloadable as pdf file at end of post)

Teachers for Choice is a reader-supported publication. To receive new posts and support my work, consider becoming a free or paid subscriber.

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June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission

c/o White House Faith Office

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

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George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

****The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs*



New York Workers For Choice Final Religi...

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Start writing



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Daniel [REDACTED] >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Denied religious exemption

Date: Mon, 16 Jun 2025 01:17:38 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

[My name is Daniel \[REDACTED\]. I was a New York City firefighter for almost 16 years. \[REDACTED\] of 2025 I would have completed my 19th year of service. I was forced to retire on March 24 of 2022 because of a denied religious exemption to the Covid 19 vaccine mandate imposed on NYC workers. I chose to retire rather than face termination. I was placed on leave without pay on November 1st of 2021, then denied a religious exemption in February of 2022 via email and given ultimatum to either comply or get terminated within 3 days of receiving that email. I chose to retire under severe distress. After retiring abruptly, my wife and I decided to sell our home on Long Island and most of possessions and relocate to \[REDACTED\] with our young daughter to flee the political climate of NY and be close to family. In \[REDACTED\]. It was extremely difficult to leave family behind on \[REDACTED\] but only through a leap of faith and family support we have been able to move forward through many challenges and difficulties. I had deplete most of my retirement and savings to stay afloat and pivot in our careers. I was left behind by a job that prides itself in not leaving anyone behind after dedicating almost 16 years of my life building a great reputation and track record while being trained within special operations of the FDNY. I worked as a member of Engine company 298 in Jamaica Queens and Marine Company 4 out of Fort Totten, also in Queens. Please correct the wrongs and make this right for all the fired and displaced employees and workers of New York City. Sincerely- Daniel J \[REDACTED\]](https://protect2.fireeye.com/v1/url?k=29304a86-4c7df313-29376e63-000babff41af-d0f893318676a106&q=1&e=83c4c3de-1b35-41be-a347-51e8cca0577d&u=https%3A%2F%2Fsubstack-post-media.s3.us-east-1.amazonaws.com%2Fpost-files%2F165803095%2F198b9fb3-ab70-40e9-acad-456c96571ac2.pdf%3FX-Amz-Algorithm%3DAWS4-HMAC-SHA256%26X-Amz-Content-Sha256%3DUNSIGNED-PAYLOAD%26X-Amz-Credential%3DASIAUM3FPD6B3BSP2P2A%252F20250616%252Fus-east-1%252Fs3%252Faws4_request%26X-Amz-Date%3D20250616T045551Z%26X-Amz-Expires%3D3600%26X-Amz-Security-Token%3DIOQJb3JpZ2luX2VjEGSaCXVzLWVhc3QtMSJGMEQCIa8YdQLFIMGCEFoR8RKz9CUkLBP2VYwUsVxIrRPa1l4AiBFbPJW9FmqamWIM3pvnnYhlbgzyVffw10fOIt8gvqJjCr5AwhUEAQaDDMwMjQ3MTEyNjkxNSIMcVJoSK%252FmHQHxjKhaKtYD2A4gw6Ws%252B7nFaky69hXMH%252FzTM%252F2TWjUTmyuPCB5hFJmNsb2gm7IPFw895VEFSfZxjIl2emPA%252BO9AIA5%252Bz%252FtPDIJnVA8PWABWH9ndH5RZ0FIbsWnFJ6ngA16CvxLeyJemhTqHimpET9cIC%252FELhChCcyjh3QG4Hb8dv4Z8CrbZza0VR%252BM1jY56xhlDCc6ftWdf4xFtd6kUGh1yD3nUj9rZyByFwoKeJlaPA%252FI2Dgljun5f%252Fb4Z5fnVLC2OBkuHnEPUIY6nalYSUOMP02x5%252FTV5A4miRZkEPfKcL6sRhIjZezOxeuNdSyZDvAgigq68J85VTe3Sq0OCwbvYWG3YPTRu3x3LdspaY90ITEsY9kxsHwh3Pjtkp%252F%252B%252FYgru1McAM2Dc65C9Bllr%252BvrgRKiJ2yhaXNdguFHS4lnV7kr5vIQAAotmSi1tQg039SCnfxRmOpE4uihMVFYjCQ3bXiUd2CM%252BJtRVwWpDWhbgx2VZyMqM988OgW3KL1ib%252FW8ME4T%252BcyFNg2Kvsl%252FxFGa1GAKPU1MsXyGRHbR5CMuf9F9qF9ITd2Yp4RkDdSIBKdc66Z5%252B4dm%252BGIp%252Bam%252BiDzQHD0Oht0GxA3x64eWc9HQXyXV3gTPnHDHBBMtIw3Iq%252BwgY6pgHKHd2uJwP502YFjgxx2sWj3MXKj6PCyM2c2U1d8iETpmXUBXOsLAKVg1e6KX5KwIw2HZCHYZb1oxAIBzldOUT8vIV7ljqcIT4o1XETKsvfq%252FHG1N3LYeTeaWPgYqRwAwcEdA9Y0u7NHL%252F23nysbt7WMB%252FVT7PaEruNEEcQd8AOiELKIz6NkMVYg3hQJYq%252BeDRh6maT0n7NnrQl%252BGLVUbn2tCRyTU5D%26X-Amz-Signature%3D3f343b406ab2f25276cbb1c0d9c4026c266898bbdbd22bb294876fc43b7f0077%26X-Amz-SignedHeaders%3Dhost%26response-content-disposition%3Dattachment%253B%2520filename%253D%2522New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf%2522%26x-id%3DGetObject</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Sent from my iPhone



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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Aborted Fetal Cells

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: prettygirl2c <[REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Cc: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] NYC Teacher Denied Religious Exemption

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 22:36:12 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is [REDACTED] I was a special education teacher for NYCDOE for 15 years. I submitted a request for religious exemption from the vaccine and was denied. I appealed and was again denied. At the time of my request I had an out-of-classroom position that could have been done remotely. I was still denied. The union was aware my job could be done remotely but did not help protect my job.

When schools were shut down March 2020 we were sent home to work remotely. September 2020 schools opened and I worked the entire year not vaccinated and with no health issues. The following school year, October 2021 I was forced to leave for not taking the vaccine.

As a result of losing my job I have suffered emotionally and financially. My pension penalized since I was forced to leave before completing 20 years of service.

I appreciate your time and pray something can be done to help us.

If you need any additional information please let me know.

Thank you again,

[REDACTED] PII

Sent from my Galaxy



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
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Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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From: Ronette Stanlewicz <[REDACTED]>

To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liberty (Ronette Savoth)

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 21:02:23 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission_(1)_1).pdf;
Dear_Members_of_the_Religious_Committee,_1)_3)_3).pdf



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

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Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

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First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

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Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

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We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

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Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*
Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*
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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

Dear Members of the Religious Committee,

My name is Ronette [REDACTED], and I was a New York City DOE employee for over 18 years as a paraprofessional when my “Religious Exemption” was denied. I was subsequently put on “Leave without pay.” As a disciplinary action, the city also didn’t allow unemployment for those who opposed the COVID-19 shot. I was also at risk of losing my health insurance for my family. Many of us lost our insurance when the “Deadliest infectious disease” was at every corner of the earth and appears to be more of a public health emergency than the virus itself. We continue to fight to be reinstated for all of our losses because of our religious beliefs. Your support and actions will create POSITIVE change for all.

Sincerely,

Ronette [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: victoria [REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] NY Workers for Choice

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 20:54:10 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Dear_President_Trump's_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf;
New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Attached is my personal letter and Teachers for Choice letter regarding the NYC Teachers religious exemption case.

Thank you
Victoria [REDACTED]

June 14, 2025

Dear President Trump's Religious Liberty Commission:

Pope Francis has declared 2025 as the Jubilee of Hope, emphasizing faith, renewal, and unity. This resonates with me on so many levels. I have lost something that defined so much of my life. Losing my career working with children with Autism for 23 years was a massive shift to my life and the lives of my family. Having the support of my husband and my Catholic faith has inspired me to continue to grow and put Jesus Christ front and center in my life. My strength, my determination, and my faith has gotten me through the last 5 years. I held strong to my freedom of religion and did not allow myself to be told what to do with my health and my body. My motto throughout this entire ordeal was Faith over Fear.

I was a New York Special Education Teacher. I worked for the Department of Education. I was terminated for not taking the experimental Covid shot. I am so proud of myself and many other New Yorkers who have all stood up to this tyranny. I applied for a religious exemption, but was denied. I stood up for freedom of religion. This was a personal choice and I believe everyone should have the ability to make the best choice for themselves and their families.

Hope is a powerful feeling to have in your heart. It keeps us moving forward in uncertain times. I have maintained that better days are ahead of us if you continue to believe in what is right and good in the world. It shaped my mindset and overall well being during this difficult time in my life. I never wavered on my decision and continue to believe I will be made whole in the future.

Sincerely,

Victoria [REDACTED]

New York City Special Education Teacher



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

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First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

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Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Robert [REDACTED] >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please Help Us- Fired NYC Educator denied Religious Exemption

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 19:54:39 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is Robert [REDACTED] and I was a New York City Public School [REDACTED] teacher that was fired for refusing to take the Covid vaccine. I attempted to submit a religious exemption based on my sincerely held religious beliefs and I was denied not once but multiple times even after trying to appeal. I worked for the NYC Department of Education for 9 years and I loved my career, I'm still to this day struggling to recreate myself and to pursue a path that I loved as much as I loved to teach. I hope that you take the time to really help all of us at Workers For Choice so that we can get back to normalcy and continue to pursue the careers that we loved.

Sincerely,

Robert [REDACTED], Teachers For Choice

--

Best,
Robert [REDACTED]
K-12 [REDACTED] Teacher



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please help us- Fired NYC Educator denied Religious Exemption

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 19:50:12 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

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Best,

Robert [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Education Teacher

[REDACTED] PII



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

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The White House
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Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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From: C C <[REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Personal appeal to the Religious Liberty Commission

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 19:11:12 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: RA_Appeal_(1).docx

June 15, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission

c/o White House Faith Office

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

My name is Craig [REDACTED] I was a member of the NYC Police Department for 27 years, 20 of which I worked in the Bomb Squad. The majority of the time I was in charge of not only a response team but also as the training Sergeant. I was unjustly forced to retire from my job after refusing to take the Covid vaccine because of my seriously held religious beliefs. I submitted a request for a religious accommodation, which was denied, and an appeal which was also denied. I then filed a federal EEO complaint, which was denied without review.

I don't carry much hope that justice will ever be served in this case, but maybe this commission can rectify the problem and bring me closure. Without getting into the weeds, I decided to just share my final appeal with all of you in the attachment at the bottom of this email. It addresses the reasons for my appeal and I think it proves that they never even read my request. I've also copied below a letter from New York Workers for Choice, who have been in this fight with all of us since the beginning.

Thank You and God Bless,

Former Sergeant SDS Craig [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission

c/o White House Faith Office

The White House

1600 Pennsylvania Avenue

NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the *Kane* case**. Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

Michael Kane, Founder *Teachers for Choice*

Aura Moody, *Teachers for Choice*

Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*

Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*

Sophy Medina, *Bravest for Choice*

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*

George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

****The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs*

Director Melocowsky,

I am appealing this denial of my Religious Exemption Request. Although as per the Civil Rights Act of 1964, an employer cannot question the validity of my sincerely held religious beliefs, I do understand that you have a right to ascertain whether I am authentic in my request and not simply using this as an avenue to avoid the Covid Vaccine. I believe that I have more than documented my case and it appears as if the documents in which I submitted were not even considered. With that said I will be going through my denial reasons and answering them out individually.

The first reason for my denial was that my objection was personal, political or philosophical. To begin, my reason is personal. I have always been Pro-Life and have dedicated my personal time to volunteering with the Orange County Right to Life. I believe that Abortion is the greatest evil of our time and the mere fact that they use the fetal cells of aborted children to develop these vaccines is diabolical. I also believe that the Lord Jesus Christ who created all of us requires us to stand in the face of evil and to fail to do so will put my immortal soul in danger of eternal damnation. This belief comes from my upbringing as a Catholic.

Although Pope Francis says Catholics can get this vaccine without endangering their soul, many other Cardinals and Bishops are saying it can. The Catechism of the Catholic Church makes it clear in paragraph 891 that the Pope is only infallible when he proclaims a definitive act, a doctrine pertaining to faith or morals. The same paragraph states that he shares this infallibility with the body of Bishops. That being said, a proclamation of doctrine has only been done a small number of times in history. This has not been proclaimed as a church doctrine.

As a member of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Fatima, I fall under the jurisdiction of Bishop Athanasius Schneider who has made it clear that it would be sinful to cooperate even indirectly with the crime of abortion.

As for this being political. I have made no statements that would indicate that this is the case. To assume this is pure conjecture and a false assumption.

As for philosophical. I submit the definition for Religious Philosophy as per Wikipedia. "Religious philosophy is philosophical thinking that is influenced and directed as a consequence to teachings from a particular religion". I guess it is Philosophical. My question is why would that be a reason to deny a Religious Exemption request?

The second reason for my denial was that the statement does not appear to be written by the applicant/generic statement does not support the candidates request. I've submitted numerous documents. Some written by me, some with the assistance of the Confraternity of Our Lady of Fatima and some with the help of legal professionals. All of which are acceptable and common avenues when dealing with legal documents. All of these documents absolutely reflect my beliefs.

The final reason for my denial was, the written statement does not set forth how religious tenants conflicts with vaccine requirement. Although I feel the original documents did set forth these tenants, hopefully this document and the information I set forth in the first few paragraphs does.

In conclusion, I hope that this request is sincerely considered and not rejected as part of a procedural witch hunt. I will be including the original documents in a separate attachment for your reference.

Thank You

Sergeant Craig 

From: Monique [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Exemption

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 18:52:06 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

My name is Monique [REDACTED], I worked as an Emergency Medical Technician serving my Community for 20 years. I was employed at Montefiore Medical Center located at 600 East 233rd Street, Bronx, NY 10466 as a Patient Care Technician. I was terminated for refusing to take the Covid-19 vaccine based on my Sincerely Held Religious Beliefs. As a Christian I believe that my body is a temple of God's creation, and deem abortion to be a sin. Covid-19 vaccine was developed, manufactured and tested using aborted fetal cell lines and my Religious Faith would not allow me to be associated with anything connected to abortion. I myself had just suffered an ectopic pregnancy during this time, and was trying to conceive again. I requested reasonable accommodation/religious exemption under Title VII 1964 Civil Right Act. My request was denied by Montefiore Medical Center. Montefiore Medical Center violated Federal Law Title VII and disregarded my Religious Beliefs. Due to employer violation of Federal Law, I have suffered financial ruin, loss of enjoyment of life, emotional harm, mental anguish, inconvenience of life career change, and suffered eviction from my home. I had to resort to receiving public assistance. How can a Woman who is ProLife, pro family get a fairing in court? The United States of America was founded on Christian values and enlightenment principles with religious liberty as a cornerstone. Our Founders prioritized individual rights, reason and self-governance. I'm asking the Religious Liberty Commission to take action and remedy this injustice.



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

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Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: [REDACTED] PII >

To: " [REDACTED] PII " < [REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fw:

New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 17:24:49 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

My name is [REDACTED]. I was employed for 8yrs in the Security Department at Montefiore Medical Center located at [REDACTED]. I was terminated for refusing to take Covid 19 vaccine based on my sincerely held religious beliefs. As a Christian I believe that my body is a temple of God creation and abortion is a sin. Covid 19 vaccine was developed, manufactured and tested using aborted fetal cell lines and my religious faith would not allow me to be associated to anything connected to abortion. I requested reasonable accommodation/religious exemption under Title VII 1964 Civil Rights Act. My request was denied by Montefiore Medical Center. Montefiore Medical Center violated Federal Law Title VII and disregarded my religious beliefs. Due to employer violation of Federal Law, I have suffered financial ruin, loss of enjoyment of life, emotional harm mental anguish, inconvenience and eviction. I had to resort to receiving public assistance, the State of New York also denied me unemployment insurance. I filed Title VII complaint with United States District Court Southern District of New York and Hon. J. Paul Oetken dismissed my case at the district level. Hon. J. Paul Oetken is openly homosexual gay man to be confirmed as an Article III Judge and pro LGBTQ+ rights. Hon J. Paul Oetken was married by United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit Judge Alison Nathan who is an openly married lesbian. My case is now in Second Circuit Court of Appeals NY. How as a Christian who believes that marriage is between a Man and a Woman, pro family get a fair hearing in court? United States was founded on Christian values and enlightenment principles with religious liberty as a cornerstone. Founders prioritized Individual rights, reason and self-governance. I'm asking Religious Liberty Commission to take action and remedy this injustice!

Thank You

----- Forwarded Message -----

PII

PII

Sent: Saturday, June 14, 2025 at 06:32:38 PM EDT

Subject: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

[Yahoo Mail: Search, Organize, Conquer](#)



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

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After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

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We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

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Sincerely;

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious exemption NYC Denial

Date: Sun, 15 Jun 2025 10:19:23 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

TO: Religious Liberty Commission

c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

I was employed by the New York City Department of Education ("DOE") as a teacher for the past 21 years.

I possess religious objections to the DOE's vaccine mandate but was denied a religious exemption and never given the opportunity to appeal that denial.

I had no choice but to sign the waiver and did so under protest and duress, certainly not of my own free will, because I need my health insurance to support my husband who is a cardiac patient. He has had two heart attacks, has three stents in his heart, and takes four to five heart medications.

The waiver extended my LWOP until September 6, 2022, and allows me to keep my health insurance until that time. It also stated that I may be reinstated before then if I get vaccinated.

I sent an email to various DOE officials on November 30, 2021, indicating that I signed the waiver under duress.

I feel constantly compelled and coerced to choose to become vaccinated contrary to my religious beliefs so that I can earn a living and gain an income.

Additionally, this situation has taken an enormous psychological toll on me. I am a nervous wreck and experience mental anguish and stress on a daily basis.

Every day I face immense pressure to choose between my faith and my job.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Sincerely

Carolyn [REDACTED]



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Annette B <[REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request to President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee I

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 21:01:39 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Annette_Backof_letter_6_14_25_Religious_Liberty_Commission_-_Google_Docs.pdf

June 14, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500
Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Members of President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee:

My name is Annette [REDACTED] and I have been employed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) as an Elementary School Teacher since 1998. On September 10, 2021, Arbitrator Martin Scheinman unilaterally issued a UFT Award mandating COVID-19 vaccines for DOE employees. On October 4, 2021, I was placed on involuntary Leave Without Pay for declining the experimental COVID-19 shot. On October 6, 2021, I applied for a Religious exemption, but my request was denied; and I did not get an opportunity to appeal and I was also denied without a hearing.

In November 2021, following a decision rendered by the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2nd. Cir. 2021), I would like to highlight that Arbitrator Martin Scheinman via the UFT Award and Mayor Bill de Blasio via the Gothamist flagrantly discriminated against certain employees and their sincerely held religious beliefs by stating that exemption requests shall be only considered for recognized and established religious organizations such as Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses. On September 21, 2021, Health Commissioner Dave Chokshi brought to the attention of Arbitrator Martin Scheinman that some people had expressed concerns about the use of fetal cells in the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines, but he made no efforts to correct his discriminatory policy towards certain religious groups after issuing the UFT Award. On November 30, 2021, I was informed of a Final Notice of Leave Without Pay via email. On February 11, 2022, my employer terminated me without my 3020a due process.

I have been informed that President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee will be convening for the first time on June 16, 2025. I am respectfully pleading that you address the letter sent to you by New Yorkers for Choice on June 12, 2025. I hope the tens of thousands of New Yorkers whose constitutional, human rights and labor rights have been violated, are no longer ignored. These individuals need to be held accountable and justice needs to be served for me and all workers who were unjustly terminated from their jobs.

Sincerely,
Annette [REDACTED]

June 14, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500
Sent via email to: RLC@usdoj.gov

Dear Members of President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee:

My name is Annette [REDACTED] and I have been employed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) as an Elementary School Teacher since 1998. On September 10, 2021, Arbitrator Martin Scheinman unilaterally issued a UFT Award mandating COVID-19 vaccines for DOE employees. On October 4, 2021, I was placed on involuntary Leave Without Pay for declining the experimental COVID-19 shot. On October 6, 2021, I applied for a Religious exemption, but my request was denied; and I did not get an opportunity to appeal and I was also denied without a hearing.

In November 2021, following a decision rendered by the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2nd. Cir. 2021), I would like to highlight that Arbitrator Martin Scheinman via the UFT Award and Mayor Bill de Blasio via the Gothamist flagrantly discriminated against certain employees and their sincerely held religious beliefs by stating that exemption requests shall be only considered for recognized and established religious organizations such as Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses. On September 21, 2021, Health Commissioner Dave Chokshi brought to the attention of Arbitrator Martin Scheinman that some people had expressed concerns about the use of fetal cells in the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines, but he made no efforts to correct his discriminatory policy towards certain religious groups after issuing the UFT Award. On November 30, 2021, I was informed of a Final Notice of Leave Without Pay via email. On February 11, 2022, my employer terminated me without my 3020a due process.

I have been informed that President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee will be convening for the first time on June 16, 2025. I am respectfully pleading that you address the letter sent to you by New Yorkers for Choice on June 12, 2025. I hope the tens of thousands of New Yorkers whose constitutional, human rights and labor rights have been violated, are no longer ignored. These individuals need to be held accountable and justice needs to be served for me and all workers who were unjustly terminated from their jobs.

Sincerely,
Annette [REDACTED]

From: george [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious exemption

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 17:26:44 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Murphy_Appeal_Letter.docx

Inline-Images: image1.jpeg; image1(1).jpeg; image2.jpeg; image3.jpeg



Sent Ifrom my

I was a New York City fireman for 22 years with the department for over 24 at that time. I was put on leave with out pay for 10 and a half months. I was under a lot of stress at that time and drinking very heavy I have certified PTSD from 9-11 being there that day and digging for the first month and then playing the bagpipes and more funerals then I lost count years ago. I went down to the FDNY psychiatrist and ask to go away for drinking and PTSD everything was set up until he found out I wasn't vaccinated he said sorry there's nothing I could do and said 0900 tomorrow you are on leave without pay. I ended up going away with no job and no income coming

Identify religion/creed: I grew up Irish Catholic went to Roman Catholic Church had 4 sacraments thru the Roman Catholic Church. When I was a child I went to church on a regular basis. If we were away no matter where we were we had to find a church for Sunday mass. continue page 1

Identify the work rule(s) or requirement(s) at issue:

Covid 19 vaccine. I never knew vaccines were made or tested with aborted fetal cells + DNA altering.

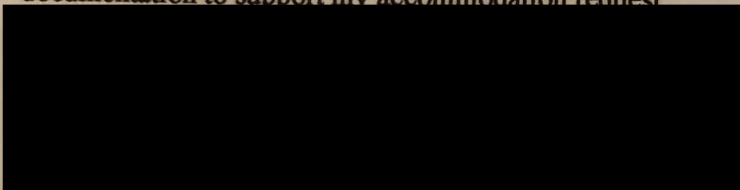
Describe the religious practice(s) or belief(s) in conflict with the work rule(s) or requirement(s):

The Bible teaches that God created human beings in his image (Gen 1:26-27). This means that human life is sacred and God created the human body and its human immune system to function as he created it. The Bible also teaches that human life begins at conception. (Psalm 139:13-16) Therefore, abortion is taking of a human life and is murder and forbidden by God. Any vaccine that uses fetal cell lines to produce and manufacture (continue page 2)

Identify the accommodation that you feel would resolve the conflict between your religious practice(s) or belief(s) and the work rule(s) or requirement(s):

weekly testing

I affirm that I have reviewed this accommodation request and that it is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief. I also understand that I may need to provide necessary documentation to support my accommodation request



11/05/21

(Date)

PAGE 2 OF 2



RESET FORM

REQUEST FOR A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION FOR RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES, PRACTICES OR BELIEFS

INSTRUCTIONS: Any Fire Department employee/applicant with a request for an accommodation for religious observances, practices or beliefs should submit this completed form in person or by mail to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, 9 Metrotech, 4th Fl., Brooklyn, NY 11201, or by fax at (718) 999-1289, or by e-mail to EEORA@fdny.nyc.gov.

Name: [REDACTED]

Address: [REDACTED]

Email Address: [REDACTED]

Telephone: [REDACTED]

Social Security No. (Last 4 Digits): [REDACTED]

Office/ Civil Service Title: Firefighter

Work Location: [REDACTED]

Current Work Status: LWOP

Supervisor/Manager: [REDACTED]

PAGE 1 OF 2

Page 1

As I started my own family wife and three kids I had all the sacraments done at church and I was a half practicing Catholic. We would go to mass 15 times a year plus holidays. I've always had my Miraculous Medal and four way cross around my neck and my crush finger rosary in my pocket. But once Covid 19 hit and churches were shut down I found Pastor Stuart Guthrie through the Family Bible Fellowship. My parents are probably rolling in their graves. But Pastor Stuart really dives into the Bible and explains it like I've never heard in the Roman Catholic Church. I love it cause I can now follow him on line and listen to his bible studies and his sermons where ever I am. I pray the Rosary a few days a week I feel it calms me down and heals my soul and brings me closer to Jesus. I still go to Roman Catholic Church with the kids at St Rosa of Lima in Massapequa. My son Patrick is actually making his Confirmation there this Sunday.

Page 2

vaccines I oppose. They are dependent upon the cells of murdered babies which I believe is forbidden by God. These vaccines also give genetic code instructions to the cells that does not originate from DNA in the cell. God's intent was for the DNA within a person's body in a cell's nucleus to give genetic code instructions not anything outside the cell. This process violates God's will for humanity.

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing to formally appeal the December 21, 2021 Department's denial of my application for a Reasonable Accommodation for an exemption to the COVID-19 vaccine mandate.

By way of background, I am a member of [REDACTED] with almost twenty-five years on the job. I am currently on Leave Without Pay and have been so for about two months. In my original application, I submitted a statement outlining my religious background and journey. I am a devout and practicing Roman Catholic who sincerely believes that God is our creator and with that, he created our bodies, which are his temples. This is how I was raised and this is how I raise my children. My faith has become an increasing presence in my life, especially in the past several years.

With my faith also comes the sincerely-held belief that abortion is a sin, for it is the murder of innocent babies who do not have their own voices. As such, I am unable to receive any of the COVID-19 vaccines because they each were developed with, or from, aborted fetal cells. I can not express to the panel how strongly I oppose this practice due to my religion – it is simply something that I can not partake in.

Instead, I request that I be reinstated to full duty status with the reasonable accommodation that I submit to weekly testing by the Department and wear a mask. This is what the Department had in place before the City mandated vaccines and I understand that it worked well. In fact, I believe that increased testing of all members of the Department would be the most successful measure to protect both us and the public. This is also a practice endorsed by OSHA as an alternative to the vaccine mandate. Additionally, although I found the webpage for the City's 'Frequently Asked Questions' for the vaccine mandate, where paragraph 24 states that weekly testing is a sufficient, reasonable accommodation that does not present an undue hardship, I hereby volunteer to cover any expense associated with testing me every week to eliminate any such anticipated claim.

I understand that according to both the FDNY's and the City's EEO policies, the process for evaluating an RA request is meant to be both flexible and interactive. Indeed, Administrative Code § 8-107 (28) actually makes it an "unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer...to refuse or otherwise fail to engage in a cooperative dialogue" when one seeks a reasonable accommodation for religious purposes. With this, I was surprised and disappointed to receive the denial of my application just days before Christmas. The Department reached this conclusion without speaking with me and without offering a specific reason for doing so. Instead I received the identical, blanket denial that numerous other members have. Further, as I understand it, Title VII requires an employer to assume that a request for a religious accommodation, like mine, is sincere. Such an assumption is not acknowledged, let alone considered in the denial letter.

I believe that the Department's position here is also in violation of Administrative Code § 8-107 (3)(a), which states that "[i]t shall be an unlawful discriminatory practice for an employer or an employee or agent thereof to impose upon a person as a condition of obtaining or retaining employment any terms or conditions, compliance with which would require such person to violate, or forego a practice of, such person's creed or religion...and the employer shall make reasonable

accommodation to the religious needs of such person.” Quite simply, that has not happened here despite my clearly-stated, deeply-held religious beliefs against the COVID-19 vaccines.

Thank you for your time and consideration of my appeal. I wish nothing more than to continue to serve The City of New York as an active firefighter. Lastly, I remain available to discuss my situation with the Appellate Panel at any time.

Sincerely,

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the sender.

From: Ronette [REDACTED] >

To: "[REDACTED]" >

Cc: Michael Kane <[REDACTED]>, Aura Moody
<[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious liber [REDACTED]

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 16:44:22 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Dear_Members_of_the_Religious_Committee_(1).pdf

Dear Members of the Religious Committee,

My name is Ronette [REDACTED], and I was a New York City DOE employee for over 18 years as a paraprofessional when my “Religious Exemption” was denied. I was subsequently put on “Leave without pay.” As a disciplinary action, the city also didn’t allow unemployment for those who opposed the COVID-19 shot. I was also at risk of losing my health insurance for my family. Many of us lost our insurance when the “Deadliest infectious disease” was at every corner of the earth and appears to be more of a public health emergency than the virus itself. We continue to fight to be reinstated for all of our losses because of our religious beliefs. Your support and actions will create POSITIVE change for all.

Sincerely,

Ronette [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

From: Beth [REDACTED] >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 15:08:37 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Good Afternoon,

I am writing to you today because while I was working for the NYC Dept of Education for almost 25 years as an elementary school teacher, I was put on a forced leave because I did not want to take the then mandated COVID vaccine.

I applied for a religious exemption and was denied via email. They gave us 24 hours to appeal it. This was not enough time to do this appropriately which of course was their goal. I did not appeal in time.

I was forced out of work October 1.

I thought with the change of mayor coming in a few months things would change but the rules only changed for sports teams players, and famous concert stars who came to perform, not city employees.

After being out of work for almost 5 months I finally "complied" and was allowed back to work. I simply could not afford to pay for my house any longer. I am married to a NYC Fireman. We are not rich people.

The city took a lot from my family when this happened.

Please help us all get the back pay the city owes us, lost time towards our retirement and of course jobs back to those who were fired.

This can't ever happen again. It destroyed so many lives and we knew it then and know it know, it did not need to happen.

Thank you,

Beth [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

PS 372 teacher

New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

Michael Kane, Founder *Teachers for Choice*
Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*
Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*
Sophy Medina, *Bravest for Choice*
Arthur Roldan, *Cops 4 Freedom*
John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: tpac1266 <[REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious discrimination perpetuated by NYC

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 12:48:51 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

My name is Terri [REDACTED]. I was an [REDACTED] at Mount Sinai Hospital of Queens. I worked there for 32 years.

I was unfairly terminated because I declined the covid shot due to my religious beliefs. I was harassed daily. I was informed that a council set up by Mount Sinai, reviewed my application for Religious Exemption and found my religious beliefs to be unfounded and merit less. I hadn't proved my faith to them.

Please help right these wrongs. Healthcare workers in New York, Teachers for Choice as well as others would like to get back to work. Doing what we love. Attached is Teachers for choice letter to you.

Thank you,

Terri [REDACTED]

Sent from my T-Mobile 5G Device



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

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Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*
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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: alex [REDACTED] PII >

To: "[REDACTED] PII" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] NYC Correctional Nurse Denied Religious Exemption

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 10:21:38 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

To the Religious Liberty commission:

My name is Alejandro [REDACTED] I live in NJ but I worked for NYCHHC as a registered nurse on Rikers Island between 3/2020 and 9/2021. No accommodation for religious exemption was given even after request via email before the vaccine was mandated. I've been out of work since. I can provide a copy of the email exchange with Human Resources. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

All the best,

A. [REDACTED] RN [REDACTED] PII



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Please consider helping us in New York!

Date: Sat, 14 Jun 2025 07:33:15 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: 198b9fb3-ab70-40e9-acad-456c96571ac2.pdf

To whom it may concern at the religious liberty committee,

I am grateful and relieved that a committee was formed that could help with the struggles we face daily in NY. Please consider helping us and read my story to understand a glimpse of the issues we have been dealing with. If any other information is required please do not hesitate to ask. Below is my personal story and attached is a letter from many groups I belong too. Thank you for your time and efforts to righting the wrongs that have been done in our blessed country. God bless!

My name is [REDACTED] and this is My story:

Dr. [REDACTED], MOT, DPT, CCRP, CCI, had always been the embodiment of dedication. For over a decade, he poured his heart into his work, climbing the ranks from a fresh-faced therapist to the esteemed Director of Rehabilitation at Northwell Health, specifically Peconic Bay Medical Center. His colleagues admired his relentless pursuit of excellence, his patients cherished his compassion, and his leadership was marked by integrity and innovation including being the recipient of a multitude of awards.

But when the COVID-19 mandate swept through the healthcare sector, [REDACTED] world was turned upside down. Overnight, he found himself wrongfully terminated—his years of service and spotless record cast aside in the name of compliance. The shock was only the beginning.

[REDACTED]'s journey through the aftermath was a gauntlet of trials. Filing a claim against his employer's wrongful actions proved nearly impossible; the system seemed designed to protect institutions, not individuals. Legal representation was out of reach—attorneys hesitated, fearing retaliation from the state, and [REDACTED] was left to navigate the labyrinth alone. To his disbelief, he was denied unemployment benefits, compounding his financial and emotional strain.

Undeterred, [REDACTED] became his own advocate. He spent countless hours poring over legal documents, drafting motions, and preparing evidence. He challenged his employer and the Department of Labor, refusing to let his rights be trampled. The EEOC process was fraught with obstacles, but Gene persisted, even filing a complaint with the Inspector General to highlight systemic issues and offer constructive feedback.

His fight was not just for himself—it became a crusade for human rights and constitutional protections. Along the way, [REDACTED] connected with others facing similar injustices. He shared his hard-earned knowledge, empowering a network of self-litigators and providing hope to those who felt powerless.

Despite submitting dozens of job applications, [REDACTED] doors closed to him—his wrongful termination casting a long shadow over his career. With resilience, he forged a new path, opening his own rehabilitation practice to serve his community and support his family.

Although [REDACTED] has found a renewed sense of purpose by selflessly helping others and making a positive impact in his community, there remains an undeniable [REDACTED]

hole in his career and his heart. The injustice he faced at the hands of Northwell Health, an institution to which he devoted so much of his life, lingers as a painful reminder of how quickly loyalty and dedication can be overlooked. The sense of loss is profound—not just for the position he once held, but for the trust and camaraderie that were abruptly taken from him in violation of his rights.

In time, the COVID-19 mandate was overturned, a tacit admission that the policy had been misguided. [REDACTED] ordeal, and those of countless others, should never have occurred. Those wrongfully terminated deserve to be made whole—not just for their personal losses, but in recognition of their unwavering service and sacrifice during the pandemic’s darkest days. Their formidable contributions, born of adversity, have strengthened the very fabric of their communities.

Please help us become whole again!

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] MOT DPT CCRP CCI

The journey for New York’s healthcare heroes—once celebrated, now sidelined—has been fraught with hardship, injustice, and bureaucratic obstacles. Many of us, former Northwell Health employees, found ourselves not only terminated for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine mandate but also abandoned by the very systems meant to protect our rights. Our pursuit of justice has been hampered by the labyrinthine processes and, at times, apparent corruption within agencies like the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and the New York State Division of Human Rights (DHR). Filing a “right to sue” or even having our voices heard has been a daunting, often fruitless task, with cases delayed, dismissed, or lost in a sea of red tape.

The Mandate Overturned—But Not Our Injustice

In October 2023, New York State officially repealed the COVID-19 vaccine mandate for healthcare workers, marking a monumental shift and acknowledging the overreach of previous policies. Courts found the mandate arbitrary and capricious, and the Department of Health ceased enforcement months before the repeal became official. This legal reversal should have been a turning point—a chance for restoration and healing.

From Healthcare Heroes to “Zeros”

Yet, for Northwell Health’s 1,400 terminated employees, the repeal brought no relief. We were the frontline responders, risking our lives during the darkest days of the pandemic. Our contributions were lauded—until we questioned, hesitated, or objected to a mandate that has since been declared unlawful. Overnight, we went from heroes to “healthcare zeros,” cast aside without recourse, our dedication and sacrifice erased by a single policy decision.

Other Hospitals Are Reinstating Workers—Northwell Is Not

Across New York, other hospital systems have begun to right these wrongs. St. Joseph’s Health and Crouse Hospital, for example, have actively invited back employees fired under the mandate, recognizing both the injustice and the value of experienced staff. Their leadership acknowledges that the mandate is no longer necessary and is working to restore the careers and livelihoods of those affected.

Northwell Health, by contrast, has not followed suit. Despite the legal and regulatory changes, Northwell has not announced any plans for broad reinstatement or back pay for those it terminated. Some workers who later complied with vaccination were allowed to reapply, but there has been no systematic effort to make amends for the harm caused to those who stood by their convictions.

A Plea for Justice and Human Rights

We, the wrongfully terminated healthcare workers of Northwell Health, call upon the public, lawmakers, and human rights advocates to stand with us. Our struggle is not just about jobs—it is about the fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution and protected by the Division of Human Rights. We urge the restoration of justice for all, the reinstatement of those wrongfully terminated, and the provision of back pay for lost wages and dignity. Most importantly, we seek to ensure that no worker—no hero—ever faces such treatment again.

Sent from my Verizon, Samsung Galaxy smartphone



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

Michael Kane, Founder *Teachers for Choice*
Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*
Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*
Sophy Medina, *Bravest for Choice*
Arthur Roldan, *Cops 4 Freedom*
John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Exemption

Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2025 17:14:56 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Dear Sir/Madam,

My name is Margherita [REDACTED] I was a tenured teacher working for the New York Department of Education for 20 years. On October 3, 2021 I refused to take Covid 19 vaccine. I was put on Leave without pay. I wasn't allowed to get another job and was forbidden to go near my school.

I put in 3 requests for religious exemption and was denied all three times. Reason given that it would be an undue hardship for them to give me an exemption. Finally on February 18, 2022 I was illegally terminated by the NYC Department of v education.

I was raised catholic and I went to catholic school for 12 years. I take my religion seriously but more serious is my relationship with God. There are many things I don't put in my body.

My body is the house of the Lord. I avoid poisoning my body. I have a good relationship with God. I believe what has happened here is religious discrimination at its best. It's disgraceful and something needs to be done. Thank You for your time!

Regards,
Margherita [REDACTED]

Sent from my iPhone



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Thea <[REDACTED]>

To: [REDACTED] " [REDACTED] " <[REDACTED]>, [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
Joe.Piscapo@housegop.ct, [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] The Religious Liberty Commission

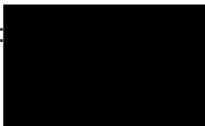
Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2025 15:13:03 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Untitled_document_-_Google_Docs.pdf

DOJ-RLC Comment-005917

To	RLC@usdoj.gov
Cc	GuidingTheImpact@gmail.com
Bcc	
Subject	Letter to The Religious Liberty Commission

From: 

Subject: Religious Liberty

To: The Religious Liberty Commission
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of The Associate Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue N.W. Room 5706
Washington D.C. 20530

Dear Distinguished Members of The Religious Liberty Commission,

"It's Morning in America", said Ronald Reagan, our 40th President in 1984. Have you ever heard a more hopeful slogan? Morning-renewal-Hope. Then, and now, this statement, this sentiment is true. We are experiencing a revival in America. It is truly, "Morning in America" again.

Religious Liberty in America is the foundation for all other liberties because without the freedom to worship God as we choose without persecution, we have no liberty at all. Our Country is The City on The Hill. We are "One Nation Under God". The Founders knew this. It was with intent that The Freedom to Worship was placed in the first of The Amendments in The United States Constitution and beside The Freedom of Speech. It was pertinent that our liberties came from God and not a government, in which they would be but permission from an authority that would demand loyalty above God. The men that wrote The Constitution grew up in families ruled by kings. Their forebears fought revolution after revolution for rights that came and went with changing monarchs up to The Glorious Revolution. They had to move from their homes to new territory to practice their faith, were disarmed by kings because of their faith, and yes, were even taxed differently because of their faith.

Connecticut is The Constitution State, I have lived here most of my life outside of my service in The United States Air Force. I am a Christian with a Biblical Worldview. During the Covid pandemic, Connecticut exercised emergency powers that grossly abused the citizens of our state, disparaging Christians, parents, and persons with medical and religious exemptions. The state claimed it wanted safety, but no responsible representative should have forced paper masks as effective tools against airborne particulates nor 6 feet of distance, especially on our children. Churches were asked to close while bars were open. The Covid vaccine was pushed on citizens that didn't want it, as were the Covid

tests. Our Religious Exemptions were taken away and House Majority Leader Bob Duff stated that he had no way to measure our faith and no way to determine if Christians were lying about our faith. If he could not himself determine the devotion of our faith, it was better to remove our liberty to exercise it. I can not begin to explain the dangerous precedent this set.

I am a homeschooling mom. I chose to do this after Covid closed the schools and introduced "distance learning". I have no regrets in my decision. [REDACTED] my son, is excelling in his environment and seems to be outperforming his public school peers. Recently, Connecticut targeted homeschool parents in an attempt to regulate us for no reason. The legislature lied about a tragic story of a young man held hostage in his home after being removed from a school in Waterbury, Ct. They said he was removed to be homeschooled and that this was justification to target parents. The poor child, now an adult, was removed with the understanding that the family was moving and leaving the district. No one followed up, despite concerns that had been raised. The incident is horrific but not a homeschooling matter. Many homeschool families are devout Christians. We enjoy the freedom to incorporate our faith into our education, something regrettably taken out of public schools and should be restored. Our homeschoolers don't have to feel the pressure of the mandated vaccine schedule here in Connecticut. Our children are not exposed to CRT, Anti-God communism, LGBTQ, sexualization, Transgender ideologies, and are not forced to undress in front of anyone that makes them uncomfortable. Our children are allowed to be children. Their identity is as children of God and citizens of a nation under God. Their pride can be in their accomplishments and not based on sexual experiences their government rewards.

I have always loved American History. Our Founders got it right and I do have hope that our Religious Liberties will be restored. I see revival in the churches and in Bible Study groups. I see ordinary people standing up against the terrible bills here in Connecticut infringing on the rights of Christians, from abortion up to birth to regulation of Parental rights. "It is Morning in America". With the help of The Religious Liberty Commission and a True interpretation of our U.S. Constitution, we will forever be that City on The Hill and "The Beacon of Hope" for the world.

Sincerely,
Thea [REDACTED]

From: Orlando [REDACTED] >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fired FDNY Firefighter Religious Rights illegally violated during COVID

Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2025 14:11:38 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Letter_to_DJT.docx

Attention Religious Liberty Commission. My name is Orlando [REDACTED] I was a former 16 year veteran of the FDNY firefighter who was fired over the COVID 19 vaccine even though I lawfully filed for a religious exemption. Please see the attached letter explaining my personal experience. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely;

Orlando [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED]

June 13, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500
Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

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FROM: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

June 13, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500
Sent via email to: [REDACTED]

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

I pray that you and all your families are all doing well. My name is Orlando [REDACTED], I was a proud 16-year firefighter veteran of the FDNY. I loved being a firefighter and sacrificed my mind, body, and soul serving the people of New York. At the time I received the call to become a firefighter I was living in Los Angeles CA, and decided I would drop everything in my life to pursue my dreams of becoming one of New York's Bravest. On March 15, 2022 I was unlawfully terminated after I requested for a religious exemption which was denied. I was subsequently locked out of my firehouse while being placed on indeterminate involuntary leave without pay (IILWOP) for refusal to comply with the policy of mandatory COVID 19 (EUA) vaccinations.

At the time of all of this my wife was 38 weeks pregnant and on bedrest with our third child [REDACTED] and our medical insurance was cancelled prior to her giving birth. This placed us in a very difficult position welcoming our son without any medical insurance which immediately put us in debt with medical bills after his birth. This also put us under a large amount of emotional and mental stress during a time that we should have been solely focusing on the welcoming of our brand-new son.

After the birth of our son, my wife was forced to go back to work much sooner than we had anticipated because we were falling into an insurmountable amount of debt. Instead of

spending time with her new born son we were put in an uncomfortable position where she had to return to work just to keep us from drowning in debt.

The amount of unnecessary stress this has placed on our family has been detrimental to our family's well-being. My health was compromised as I developed a stomach ulcer from the legal back and forth battle with the FDNY and The City of New York. Our young Children have witnessed and suffered the consequences of the daily struggles we had to endure just to provide for them to ensure their happiness. We have gone to great lengths to protect and shield them from all of the turmoil this has caused our family but unfortunately this entire process has affected them as well.

After three years of trying to keep up with the insurmountable amount of debt we made the difficult decision that we could no longer afford our home and decided to sell our beloved dream home in Long Island NY and move our family to South Carolina.

We lost our home and hundreds of thousand of dollars in damages throughout this entire process. I am reaching out today because we pray that the President of the United States of America will rectify these tyrannical acts that have been committed against us and the other hundreds of families of New York that were victims of cruel and unjust policies that ruined the lives of many. Please Mr. President intervene and restore what is rightfully ours and help us return some normalcy back to the families that suffered for far too long. May God bless Donald J Trump and God Bless America!

Sincerely;

[REDACTED]

From: Christine [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] New York Workers for Choice

Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2025 13:34:48 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Dear_Members_of_the_Religious_Liberty_Commission;.pdf;
New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission_(1).pdf

Good afternoon,

Please see the attached documents.

Sincerely,

Christine [REDACTED]

June 13, 2025

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

My name is Christine [REDACTED] I am a New York State professionally certified public school teacher for grades 1 - 6. I am a dedicated professional and have been working as a teacher for the past 10 years, since my college graduation in [REDACTED] I started my career in Baltimore, Maryland where I taught middle school math for three years. I moved back to my home state of New York to work as a teacher in the NYC DOE. I was employed as a 5th and 6th grade math and science teacher in the DOE from August 2018 - October 2021 when I was fired from my position due to my refusal to take the Covid 19 vaccination.

I applied for two religious exemptions before being laid off in September of 2021. I was denied the first attempt with a vague explanation that my letter did not meet the requirements for exemption, but did not specifically state why. I quickly appealed the decision and submitted another request which was then denied again for the same vague reasoning.

It then came time for me to make a decision - do I take the severance package and waive my right to trial in the future, or do I let the DOE fire me. I chose the latter and was "force resigned" by the DOE in October 2021. I then had to quickly pack my classroom, say goodbye to my students, and leave my beloved position as a middle school teacher in [REDACTED]

I was able to get a job in the [REDACTED] as a Catholic School teacher a few months after being let go. As grateful as I am that I was given the opportunity to do what I love and teach again, I would be remiss to say that I have not greatly struggled financially, emotionally, and mentally since my departure from my stable DOE job. I had to take a pay cut of nearly \$30,000 and had to leave the apartment I had been living in due to not being able to make rent. Since then, I have changed schools, gotten married, and moved into an apartment with my husband who has been a [REDACTED] for the past 18 years. We want nothing more than to buy our first home together and begin to start a family, but this idea begins to seem more and more like a pipe-dream for us as we live paycheck to paycheck trying to live in NYC as two hard working individuals.

I write to you in support of the letter that was sent on behalf of NYC Teachers for Choice.

Sincerely,

Christine [REDACTED]



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

Michael Kane, Founder *Teachers for Choice*
Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
Diane Pagen, *Teachers for Choice*
Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*
Sophy Medina, *Bravest for Choice*
Arthur Roldan, *Cops 4 Freedom*
John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Tom [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Submission to the RLC

Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2025 12:26:40 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Religious_Liberty_Commission.docx

Good morning RLC

For your consideration, please see attached testimony written and submitted by me.

Thank you,

Tom [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Address

Religious Liberty Commission
c/o The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington DC 20500

June 13, 2025

Dear members of the Religious Liberty Commission,

I thank you in advance for allowing me this opportunity to submit my brief testimony.

In 2021 NYC implemented a Covid Vaccine Mandate for all city employees, at the time I was a 37-year veteran of the Fire Department of New York City (FDNY), having achieved the rank of Battalion Chief. As a practicing Catholic and being fully aware that aborted fetuses were used in the development of these vaccines I knew immediately in good conscience that I could not take a vaccine which was derived from a murdered child. I immediately began to weigh my options and wrote a request for a Reasonable Accommodation (RA) based on my strongly held religious beliefs, but because of unreasonable time constraints imposed by the City my individual RA was never submitted. To this day I have not heard of a single Religious RA approved for any member of the FDNY.

So instead I was put in a position where I was forced to retire, many other city employees though were not as fortunate. You see standing firmly on their religious beliefs cost them their jobs, their income, their medical insurance, their homes, and in some cases their families. These actions were more in line with a tyrannical dictatorship than that of a free and just society.

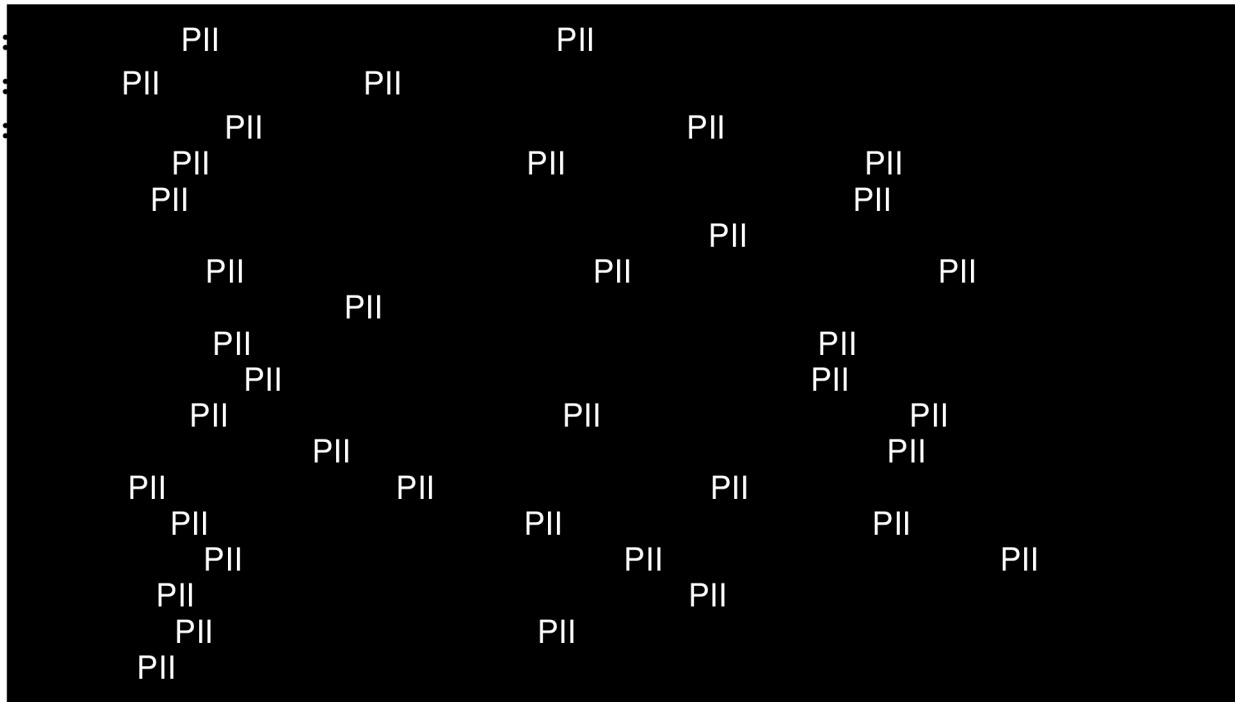
Now when the Founding Fathers established this great nation nearly 250 years ago, preserving religious liberty was among their top priorities, so it is now up to this commission to ensure that religious liberty, which has been enshrined in our Constitution since 1791, is once again made the cornerstone of our great Republic, and that what happened to those thousands of Americans who paid a very heavy price exercising that right, never happens again.

Respectfully,



Battalion Chief
FDNY (ret)

From:
To:
Cc:



Subject: [EXTERNAL] Request to President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee

Date: Fri, 13 Jun 2025 09:19:11 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Moody_Ex. 1 - Impact Bargaining-UFT Award dated 9-10-2021, Page 9.pdf;
Moody_Ex. 2 - Gothamist Article -
City Grants Vaccine Mandate Exemptions For Hundreds Of Public School Employee
s - dated 9-24-2021.pdf; Moody_Ex. 3 -
Letter to Arbitrator Martin Scheinman from NYCDOH Commissioner Dave Chokshi
dated 9-21-2021.pdf; Moody_Ex. 4 -
Email to Ellie Engler from Aura Moody Informing Her Email Account Has Been B
locked dated 10-15-2021.pdf; Moody_Ex. 5 - Letter to Chancellor Porter on Medical-
Religious Exemptions LWOP Blcoked Email and SOLAS Deficiencies 11-30-2021.pdf;
Moody_EX. 6 - Hearing Request-Waiver for Education Law 3020-a or 3020-
b Charges Filed by Aura Moody 2-9-2022.pdf; Moody_Ex. 7 -
Emails Between Stephanie, Aura Moody and Beth Norton Regarding Improperly Ter
minated Inquiry Form and Request for 3020-a Hearing 2-4-2022 to 2-11-2022.pdf;
Moody_Ex. 8 - Non-
Personalized Email from DHR to Dear DOE Employee Referenced February 11 Term
ination 1-31-2022.pdf; Moody_Ex. 9 - Open Follow-
Up Letter to NYS Legislature from New York Workers for Choice dated 5-13-
2025.pdf

Dear Members of President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee:

I have been employed by the New York City Department of Education (DOE) as a Bilingual School Social Worker since 1999. I consider myself an active public employee who has not gotten paid since October of 2021 for the reasons stated below.

On September 10, 2021, Arbitrator Martin Scheinman unilaterally issued an UFT Award mandating COVID-19 vaccines for DOE personnel. On October 4, 2021, I was placed on involuntary Leave Without Pay for declining the experimental COVID-19 shot (see **Moody Exhibits 7, pages 2-3**). On October 15, 2021, while I was on Leave Without Pay, my employer blocked my email account and failed to restore it despite timely notification (see **Moody Exhibits 4, 5**). In September and October of 2021, I applied for a medical exemption under the grounds of natural immunity, but my request was denied; my appeal was also denied without a hearing (see **Moody Exhibit 5, page 2; Moody Exhibit 7, pages 2-3**). In November 2021, following a decision rendered by the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2nd. Cir.

2021), I applied for a religious exemption, but I never received a response (see **Moody Exhibit 7, page 3**). I would like to highlight that Arbitrator Martin Scheinman via the UFT Award and Mayor Bill de Blasio via the Gothamist flagrantly discriminated against certain employees and their sincerely held religious beliefs by stating that exemption requests shall be only considered for recognized and established religious organizations such as Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses (see **Moody Exhibits 1, 2**). It is my impression that their policy of exclusion prevented employees from applying for a religious exemption as they assumed they would not qualify given those restrictions. On September 21, 2021, Health Commissioner Dave Chokshi brought to the attention of Arbitrator Martin Scheinman that some people had expressed concerns about the use of fetal cells in the development and production of COVID-19 vaccines, but he made no efforts to correct his discriminatory policy towards certain religious groups after issuing the UFT Award (see **Moody Exhibit 3**). On November 30, 2021, after being informed by colleagues that they had received a Final Notice of Leave Without Pay via email, I wrote a letter to Chancellor Meisha Porter to advise her that I had not received such a notice, but my letter was never responded to (see **Moody Exhibit 5**). On February 9, 2022, I requested a 3020-a hearing at the recommendation of the United Federation of Teachers, which was expected to be processed by my employer within 60 days, but I did not receive a response (see **Moody Exhibit 6**). On February 11, 2022, my employer allegedly terminated me without due process and notification. I was not served with a Final Notice of Leave Without Pay and/or Employment Termination Notice, documents that my employer reportedly sent to the employees via email, a delivery method that does not constitute proper service (see **Moody Exhibits 5, 7, 8**).

On June 12, 2025, New York Workers for Choice sent a letter to President Trump's Religious Liberty Commission, which I support. Please see link below:

<https://teachersforchoice.substack.com/p/ny-workers-for-choice-submits-public>

Justice for the unvaccinated across New York State has not been served. Tens of thousands of public and private sector workers and business owners were unlawfully terminated from their employment and/or displaced from their careers for declining to comply with a COVID-19 vaccine mandate that was never voted on by any legislative body nor ratified by the union membership via the appropriate collective bargaining process. It is pertinent to stress that while unvaccinated New Yorkers continue to struggle to make a living and pay their bills, New York politicians such as former Governor Andrew Cuomo, Governor Kathy Hochul, former Mayor Bill de Blasio and Mayor Eric Adams have prioritized undocumented immigrants over unvaccinated workers and business owners. They have advocated and allocated billions of the taxpayers' money, including COVID-19 funds, to support illegal aliens instead of helping and addressing the injustices that have been perpetrated against their constituents who elected them to office.

New York Workers for Choice and other freedom loving groups have petitioned the government and sought relief by reaching out to our political leaders at the city, state and federal levels, but our requests to address our grievances have fallen on deaf ears. Attached please find the Open Follow-Up Letter that was sent to the New York State Legislature by New York Workers for Choice on May 13, 2025, to wit, we have not even received an official acknowledgement (see **Moody Exhibit 9**). This letter was signed by over 635 unlawfully terminated or displaced New York workers and business owners affected by the unconstitutional COVID-19 vaccine mandates. The signatories of this letter include but are not limited to firefighters, police officers, teachers, social workers, school principals, assistant principals, sanitation workers, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, plumbers, correction officers, members of the judiciary, medical doctors, nurses, scientists, medical coders, therapists, secretaries, psychologists, lab technicians, medical interpreters, business analysts, ultrasound technologists, doormen, musicians, artists and freelancers.

I have been informed that President Trump's Religious Liberty Committee will be convening for the first time on June 16, 2025. In light of the above, I am respectfully pleading that you address the letter sent to you by New Yorkers for Choice on June 12, 2025. I hope the tens of thousands of New Yorkers whose constitutional and labor rights have been violated, are no longer ignored. In God I Trust!

Sincerely,

 **Attachments:  Exhibits 1-9**

Length of delay for these conditions may vary, and the employee must get vaccinated after that period unless satisfying the criteria for a Full Medical Exemption described, above.

- C. Religious exemptions for an employee to not adhere to the mandatory vaccination policy must be documented in writing by a religious official (e.g., clergy). Requests shall be denied where the leader of the religious organization has spoken publicly in favor of the vaccine, where the documentation is readily available (e.g., from an online source), or where the objection is personal, political, or philosophical in nature. Exemption requests shall be considered for recognized and established religious organizations (e.g., Christian Scientists).
- D. There are cases in which, despite an individual having sought and received the full course of the vaccination, he or she is unable to mount an immune response to COVID-19 due to preexisting immune conditions. In these circumstances, each individual case shall be reviewed for potential accommodation. Medical accommodation requests must be documented in writing by a medical doctor.
- E. The initial determination of eligibility for an exemption or accommodation shall be made by staff in the Division of Human Capital in the Office of Medical, Leaves and Benefits; the Office of Equal Opportunity; and Office of Employee

<https://gothamist.com/news/city-grants-vaccine-mandate-exemptions-hundreds-public-school-employees>

City Grants Vaccine Mandate Exemptions For Hundreds Of Public School Employees

BY [SOPHIA CHANG](#) AND [JESSICA GOULD](#)

PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 24, 2021



Students at PS 59 in Queens in September 2021 [NYC.SCHOOLS.CHANCELLOR.TWITTER](#)

Over 500 public school employees have officially been granted medical or religious exemptions to [the city's vaccination mandate](#). But union leaders warned that many Department of Education staffers in non-teaching positions remain unvaccinated, which could leave schools short-staffed next week.

Mayor Bill de Blasio has imposed [a strict policy on DOE employees](#) who must show proof of at least one dose of a COVID-19 vaccine by the end of Monday, September 27th. After

legal challenges by unions representing DOE workers, the city was forced to carve out [exemptions for medical or religious reasons](#). De Blasio has said the religious exemptions would also be limited to “two well-established religions, Christian Science and Jehovah’s Witnesses, that have a history on this, of a religious opposition.” The mayor warned those exemptions would be rare.

“What we’re seeing so far is a very small number of requests for medical or religious exemption. Only in the hundreds have been approved so far,” de Blasio told WNYC’s Brian Lehrer Friday. “And again, there’s well over 100,000 teachers and staff, and we’re going to work with anyone who needs to get vaccinated between now and the deadline.”

There may still be more exemptions granted because the DOE said they’re still reviewing applications.

As of Friday, “81% of all DOE employees have received at least one dose of the vaccine,” said Katie O’Hanlon, a spokesperson for the DOE in a statement. She noted that 87% of teachers have received at least one dose.



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc
Commissioner

September 21, 2021

Martin F. Scheinman
Scheinman Arbitration & Mediation Services
322 Main Street
Port Washington, NY 11050

Dear Mr. Scheinman,

Some people have expressed concerns about the use of fetal cells in the development and production of the COVID-19 vaccines. This assertion is often based on a misunderstanding of the vaccine development and production processes. **None of the COVID-19 vaccines authorized or approved by the US Food and Drug Administration contain fetal tissue or fetal cells.**

A fetal cell line was used in the development of the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. A fetal cell line is not the same as fetal tissue. Fetal cell lines are grown in a laboratory. The origin of the cell line was from an elective abortion that occurred decades ago. The fetal cells have since multiplied millions of times in the laboratory. It is these new cells that were created in the laboratory that were used to grow the adenovirus used in the Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine. Steps are taken to purify the vaccine to make sure none of the cells are included in the final vaccine product. People who are nonetheless concerned with use of a fetal cell line in Johnson & Johnson/Janssen vaccine production can get the Pfizer or Moderna vaccine.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines do not use any fetal cell lines for vaccine production and manufacturing. A fetal cell line (also from an abortion that occurred decades ago) was used early in the research phase of the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines to test their safety and efficacy. This is common practice in the development of drugs, from over-the-counter pain medications to prescription treatments, many of which were tested on cells that originated from the same cell line used to test the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. Examples of over-the-counter pain medications that have used fetal cell lines include Tylenol, Advil, Aspirin, Aleve, Sudafed, Benadryl, Claritin, Tums, Mucinex, Ex-Lax, and Pepto Bismol. No fetal cells, fetal tissue, or fetal cell lines are used to produce the Pfizer or Moderna vaccines.

Finally, while ingredients made from animal byproducts are sometimes used in vaccines for a stabilizing effect, they are not present in any of the three approved COVID-19 vaccines. Moderna and Pfizer have provided a full list of ingredients. The COVID-19 vaccines also do not contain latex or preservatives.

An array of religious groups have stressed the importance of COVID-19 vaccination to save lives from COVID-19 and have called on all people to get vaccinated. As an example, the Catholic Church has issued a clear statement that Roman Catholics can in good faith receive COVID-19 vaccines that use fetal cell lines in development. Vaccination is the most important thing people can do to protect themselves and others from COVID-19.

Additional information on the COVID-19 vaccines are available at nyc.gov/covidvaccine.

From: [REDACTED] PII
To: [REDACTED] PII
Subject: Re: Natural Immunity
Date: Fri, Oct 15, 2021 10:14 am

you are off payroll

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED] PII <[REDACTED] PII>

Sent: Friday, October 15, 2021 10:13:38 AM

[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII

Good morning All:

Please be informed that I do not have access to my DOE emails. Earlier this morning (October 15, 2021), I called the IT Department and spoke with Mr. Remy. He told me that it appears that access to my account has been blocked.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII

Sent: Thu, Oct 14, 2021 10:55 am

Subject: Re: Natural Immunity

Good morning All:

Attached please find the DOE's Determination on my application for a COVID-19 Vaccine Medical Exemption rendered on October 13, 2021, which I retrieved from my DOE email on October 14, 2021. The reason for the denial is: "Insufficient medical documentation to determine if there is valid reason to defer or delay vaccination." What the decision does not state is that the DOE has ignored the fact that I have submitted medical documentation showing that I have Natural Immunity and that I have tested negative for COVID-19 since the time I contracted the virus in December 2020 until October 12, 2021, the date I had my last COVID-19 test done. In addition, the decision should indicate that I have the right to appeal, but it does not. I am looking forward to an appeal as a matter of law.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII
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[REDACTED] PII
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[REDACTED] PII
[REDACTED] PII

Sent: Wed, Oct 13, 2021 10:02 am

Subject: Re: Natural Immunity

Ms. [REDACTED]

I will not honor your request to stop emailing the UFT because, in my opinion, your organization has failed the membership, particularly when it comes to Natural Immunity. I pay my union dues, and therefore the UFT has a responsibility to advocate on my behalf. I will seek legal options, as deemed appropriate.

SENT VIA EMAIL

November 30, 2021

Ms. Meisha Porter
Chancellor
New York City Department of Education
52 Chambers Street
New York, NY 10007

Re Applications for Medical and Religious Exemptions from Mandated
COVID-19 Vaccines
Maintaining Right to Sue for Wrongful Termination
File #: 0752536
EMP ID #: 866129

Dear Chancellor Porter:

I have been informed by some colleagues that they have received a Final Notice of Leave Without Pay (LWOP) status from NYCDOE Division of Human Capital on or about November 29, 2021. In this notice, it states "If you remain non-compliant and have not opted to extend you LWOP or return from LWOP status by November 30, you are subject to termination from service with the NYCDOE beginning December 1, 2021."

I am writing this letter to inform you of the following:

1. I have NOT received the Final Notice of LWOP. Therefore, I am not able to submit my decision as to whether or not to extend my LWOP status in SOLAS by 11:59 PM on November 30, 2021. I am already losing my pay in exchange for the DOE holding my position. I am NOT waiving my right to sue for wrongful termination. Considering that I have not received the Final Notice of LWOP, I should not be held liable for the DOE's notification failures and due process rights violations. As a matter of law, I am entitled to a hearing before the DOE's alleged termination or involuntary resignation, to wit, I have not been formally informed. I would like to stress that I have been significantly damaged by the DOE's capricious and arbitrary employment action against me, and immediate remedy is warranted to avert further injury.
2. I am NOT waiving my right to seek Medical and Religious Exemptions and Accommodations from any requirement that conflicts with my medical condition based on Natural Immunity and my sincerely held religious beliefs. Also, I am not waiving my rights to seek legal redress from any wrongful denial of such exemptions or accommodations.
3. I am NOT waiving my right to challenge the involuntary resignation, including but not limited to, through a contractual or statutory disciplinary process.

1/2

4. I am NOT waiving my right to challenge any wrongful termination by the DOE.

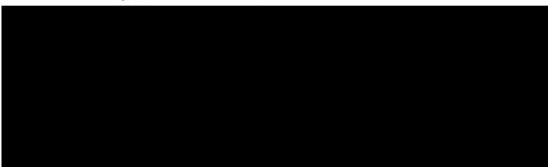
As you may recall based on my previous correspondence, I tested positive to COVID-19 on December 8, 2020. I recovered and gained Natural Immunity, which several medical experts say is just effective as the immunity acquired through a vaccine. Since the time I contracted the virus, I have undergone COVID-19 tests, being the most recent one on November 30, 2021. All the test results have shown a negative status for COVID-19. I still have a high level of Positive Antibodies, as per the SARS-COV-2 ANTIBODY TEST I underwent on September 21, 2021. Following the involuntary placement on LWOP by the DOE, I have been submitting the results of my COVID-19 tests to the DOE and UFT on a weekly basis. My positive antibodies and negative COVID-19 test results show that I am not a public health threat.

I would like to reiterate that I have reasons to believe that my application for a Medical Exemption under the grounds of Natural Immunity, which I submitted to the DOE in September of 2021, was wrongfully denied by the DOE. According to the UFT, I was denied an appeal, in contravention of my Fourteenth Amendment rights and the DOE--UFT Contract, among other applicable statutes-regulations at the federal, state and city levels. On November 21, 2021, I submitted an application for a Religious Exemption via email, but I have not received a response as of yet. Please refer to my emails below for further information-clarification.

As stated in my previous correspondence, I have no access my DOE email account since October 15, 2021. Therefore, I am sending this letter via my personal email instead of SOLAS. Upon learning that access to my account had been blocked, I notified the DOE and UFT about this situation, but the problem has not been resolved. Please refer to the email that I sent to UFT officials on October 15, 2021 at 10:13:38 AM for verification. Please be reminded that I included the emails that I had exchanged with the UFT since August 28, 2021 through October 13, 2021 as an attachment to the letter that I addressed to Chancellor Porter on November 21, 2021.

Thank you in advance for your attention to this matter.

Cordially,



Attachment: Result of COVID-19 Test dated 11/30/2021

Cc: Division of Human Capital, DOE HR Connect (via email)
Michael Mulgrew, UFT President (via email)
Pertinent DOE-UFT Staff Involved in this Case



The University of the State of New York
The State Education Department
Teacher Tenure Hearing Unit
EBA Room 987
Albany, New York 12234

Ph: PII
Fax: PII

(09/21)

Hearing Request/Waiver for Education Law §3020-a or §3020-b Charges

Instructions
to the
Tenured
Employee:

This form is for you to request a hearing on the Education Law §3020-a or §3020-b charges brought against you, or to waive your right to a hearing on such charges. You must return this form within 10 days of receipt of the charges to the Clerk or Secretary of the Board of Education that brought charges against you. If you fail to request a hearing or waive your right to a hearing within 10 days, you will be deemed to have waived your right to a hearing on the charges and your employing board will meet to determine a penalty.

Tenured Employee Information

Name	[Redacted]	Phone	PII
Address		Phone	
Address		Fax	PII
City, State Zip		Email	PII

Hearing Request or Waiver

☒	I have not been served with any charge against me or termination letter. I request a hearing on the charges served against me pursuant to Education Law §3020-a or §3020-b. I am requesting that I be put back on payroll pending a decision on my case. Please see attached emails between Anna Moody and UFT officials (2 pages).
☐	I waive the right to have a hearing pursuant to Education Law §3020-a or §3020-b. I understand the Board of Education will meet to determine the case and fix the penalty or punishment, if one is to be imposed.

Tenured Employee Attorney Information

Firm Name			
Attorney Name		Phone 1	
Address		Phone 2	
Address		Fax	
City, State, Zip		Email	

Tenured Employee Signature

Signature	[Redacted]	Date	February 9, 2022
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MOODY EX. 7

Attachments: Aura Moody - Request for Hearing on Educational Law §3020-a dated 2-9-2022.pdf (2545K)

is **responsible for making laws within the country**. Legislatures are made up of people called Legislators who are elected by the country's population, to wit, we refer as We The People. Constitutional rights are **the protections and liberties guaranteed to the people by the Constitution**. Many of these rights are outlined in the Bill of Rights, such as the right to free speech and the right to a speedy and public trial. Pursuant to the First Amendment of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances." According to the Fourteenth Amendment, "No state shall make or enforce any law which shall abridge the privileges or immunities of citizens of the United States; nor shall any State deprive any person of life, liberty, or property, **without due process of law**; nor deny to any person within its jurisdiction the equal protection of the laws." Upon information and belief, the New York City Commissioner of Health has no statutory or administrative authority to impose a new condition of employment upon City employees. Specifically, pursuant to New York Education Law §2572.9, only a City's Board of Education, or in the case of the DOE, the Panel for Educational Policy can impose a new qualification for employment in a City school district. There is no evidence on record that the DOE's Panel for Educational Policy has adopted a resolution imposing a COVID-19 vaccine as a qualification for employment with the DOE, as per New York Education Law §2572.9. Therefore, the DOE-UFT Arbitration Agreement-Award issued on September 10, 2021 is defective and must be vacated. **It is of paramount importance to highlight that any change in the condition of employment requires good-faith bargaining, as per the contracts between the City of New York and Unions.** As it pertains to the UFT, I expressed my concerns and challenged the DOE-UFT Arbitration Award on the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate before it was reached and thereafter. I also challenged the Leave Without Pay (LWOP) soon after it was issued to me by the DOE.

To me, it is unacceptable and morally repulsive that we are about to lose our jobs, deprived from our livelihoods and professional careers because of the capricious decisions of Legislators and bureaucrats who were probably sitting at their desks during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic while first responders and pedagogues were performing their duties on the field, regardless of their vaccination status, like in my case. Their arbitrary use of power and government overreach have been proven to be illegal and politically motivated, to the point that they have been forced to retreat from these unconstitutional COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates in some places worldwide. We are on the side of righteousness. We have done nothing wrong! As educators and parents, we are supposed to teach our children to think critically, become self-sufficient, self-determined and stand up for their values including opposing bullying; yet, we have our political leaders bullying us to be forced into taking a job that is against our religious beliefs, medical conditions and/or Natural Immunity. Studies in different countries, including the United States of America, have shown that patients with immunity from natural infection were far less likely to become infected again in comparison to the patients who only had immunity via vaccination. In fact, many vaccinated people have been infected again, and some of them have died or suffered side effects and permanent injuries. Their narrative about the "pandemic of the unvaccinated" has been debunked. Their cowardice and tyranny approach is intended to trample upon our constitutional rights and freedoms. Their draconian COVID-19 measures are about political control not public health and must be peacefully and legally defeated.

Ensuingly, I am presenting an outline of my case. I have been employed by the DOE since 1999. I tested positive to COVID-19 on December 8, 2020. I recovered and gained Natural Immunity, which several medical experts say is just effective as the immunity acquired through a vaccine. Since the time I contracted the virus, I have undergone several COVID-19 tests, being the most recent one on January 4, 2022. All the test results have shown a negative status for COVID-19. I have a high level of Positive Antibodies, as per the SARS-COV-2 ANTIBODY TEST I underwent on September 21, 2021.

On September 23, 2021, I applied for a Medical Exemption under the grounds of Natural Immunity, but it was denied on September 24, 2021 alleging that "Antibodies alone are not a reason not to get the vaccine." The DOE's decision also state that my "application was reviewed in accordance with applicable City, State and Federal Laws." On September 27, 2021, I appealed the DOE's arbitrary and defective decision by addressing a letter to HR Connect. In my letter, I asserted that an administrative decision involving civil and constitutional rights concerns must be based on fact-finding, conclusions of law and supported by tangible evidence. It should also indicate the instances of appeal as a matter of right. The DOE's decision is not transparent and legally sound since it does not reflect that those requirements have been met. It does not indicate that I have a right to appeal and/or the procedure to challenge it, which I presume is a flagrant violation of my due process and equal protection rights under the Fourteenth Amendment to the Constitution of the United States of America and other relevant statutes-regulations. Moreover, the decision does not specify the medical data, scientific research and applicable laws that were reviewed and considered prior to denying my application for a Medical Exemption. In my correspondence, I also highlighted that members of Congress, United States Postal Service employees and illegal migrants coming through the Southern Border, among others, are not required to take the COVID-19 vaccine. Nevertheless, the DOE is imposing that I get inoculated although I have Natural Immunity. Considering that the individuals in question are not mandated to get vaccinated, I believe the DOE's decision is discriminatory and violates the Constitution of the United States, Civil Rights Act of 1964, Rules and Procedures established by the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) and Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), among other statutes-regulations. My appeal was denied on September 30, 2021 alleging that "Post-COVID condition is not sufficient (e.g. outside isolation period)."

On October 2, 2021, I was issued a Notice of LWOP due to non-compliance with the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate. On October 6, 2021, I addressed a letter to HR Connect expressing my disagreement with the LWOP, to wit, I had not applied

for. In my letter, I requested a Medical Exemption again. I stressed that the LWOP violates Article Ten, Section E of the DOE-UFT Contract for School Psychologists and Social Workers, and I asked that the DOE make accommodations for me to work remotely. As part of my due process rights, I requested that the DOE produce all the data and medical evidence that were reviewed prior to denying my application. It is important to highlight that I worked in-person during the 2020-2021 School Year, when the COVID-19 infections were at their worst. To my knowledge, I did not endanger the safety, health or welfare of any student and/or staff member. Since the time that I was placed on LWOP, I submitted proof of negative COVID-19 tests on a weekly basis up until January 4, 2022. As agreed upon by the DOE and UFT in or about September of 2021, I should have been allowed to work remotely because of my job title, which does not require face-to-face contact with the parents/guardians. On October 3, 2021, the DOE issued a determination denying my Request for a Medical Exemption with a comment: "defer to ODA." On October 13, 2021, the DOE issued a determination and denied my request alleging "Insufficient medical documentation to determine if there is valid reason to defer or delay vaccination." What the decision does not state is that the DOE ignored the fact that I have submitted medical documentation showing that I have Natural Immunity and that I am not a public health threat based on the results of my ongoing COVID-19 tests whereas the DOE has not met the burden of proof that vaccines are more effective than Natural Immunity in fighting COVID-19. All applications for a Medical Exemption were denied without granting me a hearing, which is an outright infringement upon my due process and equal protection rights.

On October 29, 2021, I sent an email to Chancellor Meisha Porter challenging the LWOP. I attached the letters that I had addressed to HR Connect on September 27 and October 6 of 2021, medical documentation regarding my COVID-19 status and the emails that I had exchanged with the UFT from August 23, 2021 through October 13, 2021. Once again, I asked that the DOE make accommodations for me to work remotely pending a sound decision on my appeal for a Medical Exemption by the pertinent authorities. Moreover, I challenged the legality of the DOE-UFT Agreement. To date, I have not received a response.

On November 19, 2021, I sent a letter to Chancellor Meisha Porter to inform her that I would be applying for a Religious Exemption. On November 21, 2021, I applied for a Religious Exemption since the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate also conflicts with my faith. I chose not to apply for a Religious Exemption before because my personal religious beliefs did not match the requirements of the standards that were set forth in the application process, so I concluded an application would be futile at that time. In the *Kane v. De Blasio* and *Keil v. City of New York*, cases now pending before the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, the Defendants have conceded that the process and standards they had used to consider Religious Exemption applications and appeals were "constitutionally suspect" and proposed an alternative process with purportedly constitutional standards. To date, I have not received a response to my application for a Religious Exemption.

On November 29, 2021, I filed a grievance against the DOE with the UFT for unfair employment practices and contractual violations pertaining to my involuntary LWOP. On December 2, 2021, a Step One Grievance conference was held with Principal Kim Hill and UFT Representative Sheryl Dixon. At that time, I requested that all the correspondence I have exchanged with the DOE and UFT regarding the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate since August 23, 2021 to the present time be incorporated into the record of this grievance. As part of my due process rights and pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), I also asked that the DOE produce all the data, scientific evidence and caselaw that were reviewed prior to denying my application for a Medical Exemption. On December 9, 2021, Principal Hill denied my Step One Grievance.

On November 29, 2021, I sent an email to Mr. Michael Mulgrew asking that the UFT bring a claim directly to Scheinman Arbitration and Mediation Services for expedited resolution because the Arbitration Agreement was not created and implemented in good faith. I have not received a response yet.

On November 30, 2021, I addressed a letter to Chancellor Meisha Porter as I was informed by some colleagues that they had received a Final Notice of LWOP status from NYCDOE Division of Human Capital. I informed Chancellor Porter that I had not received the Final Notice of LWOP. I emphasized that: 1) I am NOT waiving my right to sue for wrongful termination. 2) I am NOT waiving my right to seek Medical and Religious Exemptions and Accommodations from any requirement that conflicts with my medical condition based on Natural Immunity and my sincerely held religious beliefs; I am not waiving my rights to seek legal redress from any wrongful denial of such exemptions or accommodations. 3) I am NOT waiving my right to challenge the involuntary resignation, including but not limited to, through a contractual or statutory disciplinary process. 4) I am NOT waiving my right to challenge any wrongful termination by the DOE. I added that considering that I had not received the Final Notice of LWOP, I should not be held liable for the DOE's notification failures and due process rights violations. I asserted that I am entitled to a hearing before the DOE's alleged termination or involuntary resignation. I stressed that I have been significantly damaged by the DOE's arbitrary employment action, and that I was seeking instant remedy to avert further injury. To date, I have not received a response.

On December 2, 2021, my Step One Grievance on LWOP was heard by Principal Hill. On December 9, 2021, my Step One Grievance was denied. On the same date (December 9, 2021), I sent an email to the UFT asking the m to pursue an appeal on my behalf to the Chancellor level, but the UFT denied my request for a Step Two Grievance. An appeal is pending.

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Based on the medical information and arguments I have submitted in support of my applications for Medical and Religious Exemptions, I continue to contest the legality of the DOE-UFT Arbitration Agreement. I have a good faith belief that the Arbitration proceeding is unfair and defective, requiring vacatur. The DOE and UFT did not act in good faith by excluding Natural Immunity as a ground for exemption, in disregard of the available data and scientific research, issue that I brought to the attention of the UFT before the DOE-UFT Agreement was negotiated and the COVID-19 Vaccine Mandate was implemented. However, my concerns were not addressed. I also feel that the UFT failed to fairly represent the members whose faith conflict with the Vaccine Mandate. People who have contracted COVID-19 and have religious beliefs are being discriminated against whereas vaccine mandates are being politicized. Differential treatment and the divisive rhetoric against the unvaccinated must stop! In God I trust.

Thank you for following up on my challenge to the prospective unlawful employment termination.

Cordially,

-----Original Message-----

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As instructed by the UFT, please be advised that I submitted my 3020-a Request Form a few minutes ago (see attached)

Sincerely,

-----Original Message-----

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Subject: Re: Improperly Terminated Inquiry Form [ref:_00D1U108On_5003p2eMm2t:ref]

Dear Ms.

Thank you for responding to the email I sent to Mr. Michael Mulgrew on February 8, 2022 at 2:20 PM. A review of the facts and evidence on record show that the New York City Department of Education, the United Federation of Teachers and the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene have trampled upon my constitutional, civil and labor rights. I have a good faith belief that the unvaccinated have been retaliated and discriminated against. For these reasons, several DOE employees, including myself, have taken legal action to challenge the defendants' capricious and arbitrary actions against us. Although the DOE is aware that individual grievances and lawsuits are pending, it has threatened the unvaccinated employees with employment termination. Such a suspicious move is reprehensible and must be condemned. This is a travesty of justice!

Please be advised that I do not agree with the form requesting a 3030-a hearing that the UFT sent me via email. I believe it is not correct. I will be allegedly terminated on February 11, 2022 without cause and due process. What I am being charged with? I have not received a termination letter and/or a charge packet. I will complete the paperwork appropriate for my title and tenure status to challenge the termination, as recommended by the UFT. I strongly object to any waiver of my rights under federal, state and city laws. I reserve my right to grieve, appeal and be served with 3030-a charges that will allow me to know what I am being charged with. I am entitled to a probable cause hearing. I am not waiving my right to sue. I am claiming my right to be represented by counsel. I am requesting that I be put back on payroll pending a decision on my grievances-hearings, as a matter of law. I will continue to seek relief-legal remedy, as deemed appropriate. Justice has not been served!

Please refer to the emails and other correspondence-documents that I have exchanged-forwarded to the UFT and DOE in order to substantiate my claims. Additional evidence will be produced at a later time, upon request.

Sincerely,

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On Tuesday, February 8, 2022 [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]> wrote:

M [REDACTED]

The UFT is taking legal action. In the interim you should complete the paperwork appropriate for your title and tenure status to challenge the termination. If you are a tenured pedagogue, that means requesting a 3020-a hearing. For other titles it may mean filing a discontinuance appeal with your borough office or a termination grievance with the grievance department. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Regards,

[REDACTED]
General Counsel
United Federation of Teachers

Get [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

Sent: Tuesday, February 8, 2022 2:20:52 PM

[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]
[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]

Subject: Re: Improperly Terminated Inquiry Form [ref:_00D1U108On._5003p2eMm2t:ref]

Dear Mr. Mulgrew:

Upon information and belief, unvaccinated DOE employees will be illegally terminated on February 11, 2022. This is a travesty of justice. At this point, I am kindly requesting that the UFT file an Emergency Motion with the Court for an Injunction to stop the wrongful termination of the affected employees. We deserve fair representation so justice can be served. In God I trust!

Your immediate attention to this urgent matter is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED] on behalf of the unvaccinated DOE employees

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]
To: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

Sent: Fri, Feb 4, 2022 6:06 pm

Subject: Re: Improperly Terminated Inquiry Form [ref:_00D1U108On._5003p2eMm2t:ref]

Hi Stephanie:

I completed the form online and submitted it a few minutes ago.

Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

-----Original Message-----

From: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>
To: [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] PII [REDACTED] <[REDACTED] PII [REDACTED]>

Sent: Fri, Feb 4, 2022 8:58 am

Subject: Improperly Terminated Inquiry Form [ref:_00D1U108On._5003p2eMm2t:ref]

? Hi,

You may have received an email from the DOE informing you that you will be terminated in February 2022. If you believe you received this email in error, please fill out this form to explain why you believe you should not be terminated. A UFT representative will contact you.

<https://uft.wufoo.com/forms/rtxxas91boahsz/>

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Thank you,



ref:_00D1U108On._5003p2eMm2t:ref

From: Division of Human Resources <DHR@schools.nyc.gov>
Sent: Monday, January 31, 2022, 3:20 PM
Subject: February 11 Termination of Employment from the NYCDOE

Dear DOE Employee,

You have previously received notice regarding your failure to comply with the New York City Health Commissioner's Order requiring vaccination of all New York City Department of Education staff. Compliance with that Order is a condition of employment. Since you have not complied with the Order and have not chosen to extend your leave without pay, despite notice and an opportunity to do so, your employment with the New York City Department of Education is terminated, effective February 11, 2022. Please note that your health insurance coverage through the City will also cease upon termination.

You must return all DOE-issued equipment and materials, including your ID, to your supervisor. Information about COBRA will be mailed separately to you at the address on file in NYCAPS. Your school and/or office will be notified of your termination as well.

If you believe you are receiving this notification in error, please email LWOPquestions@schools.nyc.gov no later than February 2, 2022.

Thank you for your service to the New York City Department of Education.

Sincerely,

NYCDOE Division of Human Resources

NOTE:

I DID NOT RECEIVE THIS EMAIL SINCE MY DOE EMAIL ACCOUNT WAS BLOCKED ON OCTOBER 15, 2021 AND IT WAS NEVER RESTORED DESPITE MY TIMELY NOTIFICATION TO THE DOE AND UFT.

[REDACTED]

New York Workers for Choice
 Email: nyteachersforchoice@gmail.com

May 13, 2025

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Majority Leader of the NYS Senate

Rob Ortt, Minority Leader of the NYS Senate

Carl Heastie, Speaker of the NYS Assembly

William Barclay, Minority Leader of the NYS Assembly

Dear NYS Legislators:

This is a follow-up to the letter New York Workers for Choice sent to ALL MEMBERS of the New York State Legislature on December 30, 2024, to wit, we have not received a response. In our letter, we asked that you help with the reinstatement of thousands of unlawfully terminated or displaced New York workers who were forced out of their careers and businesses under the pretext of the COVID-19 vaccine mandates, dictates that were never voted on by any legislative body nor ratified by the workers via contract bargaining. We also asked for legislative hearings regarding the implementation of the mandates. We are dismayed that NONE OF YOU have had the courtesy to officially respond to our letter.

The signatories of our letter are your constituents and include but are not limited to firefighters, police officers, teachers, social workers, assistant principals, sanitation workers, guidance counselors, paraprofessionals, correction officers, members of the judiciary, medical doctors, nurses, scientists, medical coders, therapists, secretaries, psychologists, lab technicians, medical interpreters, business analysts, ultrasound technologists, plumbers, doormen, musicians, artists and freelancers. Many of the signatories were terminated; others were coerced into early retirement with a financial penalty, resigned, were forced to waive their labor rights, returned to work having lost seniority and without backpay, were forced to accept demotions, were denied promotions, or lost job opportunities. In what can be considered an outright disregard of the law and a flagrant denial of due process, many workers were not even served with a final notice of leave without pay, a charge, or a termination notice prior to separation from their employment.

Former Mayor Bill de Blasio, his then Health Commissioner Dave Chokshi, his Mayoral Expert Advisor Jay Varma, Mayor Eric Adams, his former Health Commissioner Ashwin Vasan, former Governor Andrew Cuomo, his then Health Commissioner Howard Zucker, Governor Kathy Hochul and her then Health Commissioner Mary Bassett are only a few of the political leaders and health bureaucrats who have violated our constitutional and labor rights. Government agencies, private businesses and union leaders embraced the COVID-19 vaccine mandates and cooperated in unlawfully removing employees, while New York destroyed its workforce with the vaccine mandates. Particularly, Mayor Eric Adams continues to use taxpayer money to appeal the victorious lawsuits decided in favor of affected New Yorkers such as the case brought by the New York City sanitation workers.

We would like you to be reminded that public officers, including elected officials from all three branches of government, take an oath of fidelity to the Constitution or office they represent, and they are legally obligated to uphold the law on behalf of *We The People* as it pertains to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. We elect lawmakers at the local, state and federal levels to serve the American citizens. Thus, they have an obligation to hear and address our grievances. As our elected officials in New York, you have failed to uphold your oath of office by not acknowledging receipt of our letter, addressing our requests and finding a solution to the injustices that have been perpetrated against the unvaccinated New Yorkers who have stood up for medical rights, religious freedom and our Constitution. Your silence is a clear dereliction of your responsibility as public servants.

Currently, politicians including but not limited to the Governor of New York have been openly expressing outrage because some people are allegedly being deprived of due process. Ironically, their statements fly in the face of the lack of interest our lawmakers have shown to the tens of thousands of public and private sector workers who have been deprived of due process and thrown out of their careers and businesses for declining a COVID-19 shot.

It is evident that our New York officials are out of touch with the needs of the people who have elected them. For the past years, we have been contacting them at all levels of government seeking help, to no avail. For instance, New York State Legislators have had our December 30, 2024 letter in their possession for more than four months and have failed to address our requests for reinstatement and legislative hearings. We have suffered the same fate with Governor Kathy Hochul, who has not responded to the letter we sent her on March 7, 2025. Furthermore, on March 14, 2025, we reached out to New York Attorney General Letitia James asking for an investigation into the unfair labor practices related to the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccine mandates, and we were informed that her office could not assist because “we have a conflict of interest.” As it pertains to New York City, we have been disregarded by Mayor Eric Adams, who has not responded to our letter dated April 14, 2025. Upon learning that The New York City Council had suddenly taken off the agenda Resolution 5 calling for the reinstatement of the unlawfully terminated or displaced workers, we sent them a letter on December 18, 2024. Instead of voting on Resolution 5 on December 19, 2024 as scheduled, they adopted a different Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass a bill that incentivizes businesses to create workforce development and training programs for newly arrived immigrants. Senator Jessica Ramos, who is running for Mayor, has recently told the media that she would not act to reinstate and compensate the unvaccinated workers, claiming that there is no money available. On May 8, 2025, the New York State lawmakers set aside \$10,000,000 of the taxpayers’ money for the legal defense of indicted Attorney General Letitia James, money that could be used to compensate the illegally fired workers. The lawmakers’ decision to use taxpayer money for her defense is despicable and should be legally challenged, given the fact that many terminated or displaced workers and business owners have not had a day in court and cannot afford an attorney.

Wednesday, May 14, 2025, unlawfully terminated or displaced workers and business owners from across the state and many of our allies will be in Albany to restore and reclaim our constitutional rights and civil liberties. You will eventually be remembered for being the ones

who finally had the courage to be on the side of justice, or for continuing to hide and be silent on important civil rights matters of the 21st century. As Edmund Burke said, “all that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.”

In closing, we are your constituents, and we pay your salaries. We expect an official response to this letter. Justice for the unvaccinated has not been served, and relief is demanded.

Sincerely,

Diane Pagen, Social Worker, DOE, 7 years of service
Aura Moody, Social Worker, DOE, 24 years of service
Michael Kane, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Sophy Medina, Firefighter, FDNY, 16 years of service
John Macari Jr., Lieutenant, NYPD, 17 years of service
Matt Connor, Trustee, National Coalition of Frontline Workers, FDNY, 19 years of service
Tom Lapolla, Battalion Chief, FDNY, 38 years of service
Amanda Pannenbacker, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 9 years of service
Rosalina Valera, Physician Assistant, Montefiore Medical Center, 15 years of service
Maria Abicca, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Kristen Robillard, Medical Doctor, Ascension Lourdes Hospital, 26 years of service
Brendan Fogarty, Firefighter Captain, FDNY, 20 years of service
Edmund Wallace, Steamfitter, NYCDOC, 8 years of service
George Garvey, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 10 years of service
James Schmitt, Supervisor of Mechanics, NYC Parks, 15 years of service
Vince DeMaria, Senior Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 25 years service
Christopher Garry, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service
O'Brian Pastrana, Firefighter, FDNY, 17 years of service
Craig Collopy, Sergeant SDS, NYPD, 27 years of service
Daphne Halkias, Teacher, DOE, 29 years of service
Javier Vasquez, Firefighter, FDNY, 8 years of service
Debby Hartz, Guidance Counselor, DOE, 29 years of service
Billy Kozis, Dietetic Technician, The New Jewish Home, 13 years of service
Matthew Keil, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Tim Heaton, Lieutenant, FDNY, 23 years of service
Soraya Sanchez, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
John Matland, Imaging Technologist, Northwell Health, 15 years of service
Ayesha Shaheed, Emergency Medical Technician, FDNY, 20 years of service
Gabriel Dalmau, Metal Work Mechanic, DSNY, 4 years of service
Donna Rubino, Doctor of Audiology, NYU Langone, 21 years of service
Joseph Kennedy, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 23 years of service
Chloe Pashman, Education Director, Bronxdale Tenants League, 10 years of service
Mawuli Olivierre, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service (*see more names on the following pages*)

Liz Delgado, Principal Administrative Associate, NYCDOI, 26 years of service
Audrey Dennis, School Secretary, DOE, 29 years of service
Rachel Goodman, Dietician, Presbyterian Methodist Hospital, 14 years of service
Ysult Beecher, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 22 years of service
Sally Mussafi, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Sean Abell, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 2 years of service
Nicole Broecker, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Robert Banome, Firefighter, FDNY, 8 years of service
John De Luca, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Benedict LoParrino, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Jeannette Frazer, Principal Administrative Associate, NYCDOT, 18 years of service
Janet Thomas, Teacher, DOE, 25 years of service
Trina Adams, Associate Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 26 years of service
John Loiacono, Doorman, 32 BJ Union, 8 years of service
Rachel Maniscalco, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Lisa Britton, Principal Appellate Assistant, NYS Unified Court System, 5 years of service
Vincent Defonte, Firefighter, FDNY, 5 years of service
Takira Poindexter, Senior Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 10 years of service
Thomas Libretti, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 4 years of service
Dennis Strk, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Amanda Strk, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Anabelle Matyas, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Juan Lopez, Doorman, 32 BJ Union, 16 years of service
Steve Speers, Independent Animator, 20 years of service
Carla Findlay, Teacher, Highland Elementary School, 1 year of service
Toniann Miraglia, Paraprofessional, DOE, 10 years of service
Kristy Jones, Sergeant Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 25 years of service
Kim Modzelewski, School Secretary, DOE, 8 years of service
Kathy Lally, Paraprofessional, DOE, 8 years of service
Inna Cohen, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Jennette Michael Simo, Communication and Advocacy Worker, UNICEF, 3 years of service
Roxanne Valdez, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Raymond Stefanik, Senior Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 25 years of service
Annette Backof, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Rose Maria Barcia, Teacher, DOE 5 years of service
Elizabeth Parrino, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Juan Carlos Wahnnon, Plumber, NYCDOC, 9 years of service
Margherita DeBonis, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Emily Zapantis-Dalamakis, Assistant Principal, DOE, 22 years of service
Evelyn Zapata, Teacher, DOE, 30 years of service

Eileen Hagan, Registered Nurse, Northwell Syosset Hospital, 30 years of service
Senta Fromer, Teacher, DOE, 25 years of service
Dulce Williams-Carrero, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Sunil Bishun, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Eden Quirk, Court Assistant, NYS Unified Court System, 29 years of service
Kiera Sullivan, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Elizabeth Figueroa, Teacher, DOE, 11 years of service
Brenda DeLisi-Flynn, Teacher, DOE, 12 years of service
Raquel Ibarrola, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Nicole Cotilletta, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Robert Portas, Senior Court Reporter, NYS Unified Court System, 27 years of service
Phyllis Fadelici, Paraprofessional, DOE, 8 years of service
Raydiris Olivo, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Rena Gellman, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service
Mary Czado, School Secretary, DOE, 33 years of service
Betziada Cruz, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Erin DiPasquale, School Psychologist, DOE, 1 year of service
Jessica Narciso, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Fran Schmitter, Paraprofessional, DOE, 10 years of service
Serina Mendez, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Yvonne Costello, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Kerry Ben-Jacob, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Cindy Corchado, Speech and Language Therapist, DOE, 8 years of service
Debbie Bertram, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Matthew Ozimek, Associate Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 19 years of service
Michelle Martino, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Carola Martinez, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Rosa Abreu, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Tracey Porter, Associate Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 23 years of service
Meagan Velez, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Stephanie Franzese, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
D'Anna Morgan, Clerical Aide, Northwell Health, 1 year of service
Monique Moore, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Ingrid Romero, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Jeriann Jaloza, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Suzanne Deegan, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Demetra Platis, Area Manager, DOE, 12 years of service
Heidy Olivo, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Dina Hussien, Paraprofessional, DOE, 8 years of service
Dominic Florini, Professional Firefighter, Johnson City Fire Department, 10 years of service

Maria Houmbavlis, Registered Nurse, Home Care for Lourdes Hospital, 35 years of service
Anita Quash, Paraprofessional, DOE, 10 years of service
Richard Joseph, Paraprofessional, DOE, 7 years of service
Sabrina Casey, Teacher, DOE, 19 years of service
Amy Hillers, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Elena Chin, Guidance Counselor, DOE, 23 years of service
Christopher Fugelsang, Teacher, DOE, 13 years of service
Carmen Foschino, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Nicole Moore, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
David Dennis, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Eveliz Vazquez, Customer Information Representative, DOE, 10 years of service
Maria Ruscelli, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Maureen Hurley, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Horace Dennis, School Aide, DOE, 24 years of service
Anthony Morgan, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 23 years of service
Zabdiel Valera, Teacher, DOE, 16 years of service
Amoura Bryan, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Rosann Perry, School Secretary, DOE, 10 years of service
Maritza Romero, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Anastasia Christopoulos, Speech and Language Pathologist, DOE, 8 years of service
Wendy Trudo, Occupational Therapist, DOE, 15 years of service
Tavia Trusch, Assistant Principal, DOE, 40 years of service
Bonnie Skala Kiladitis, Teacher, DOE, 28 years of service
Martha Gold, Physical Therapist, DOE, 19 years of service
Elizabeth Placencio, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Frances DiProssimo, Teacher, DOE, 24 years of service
Nathalie Charles, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Tara Palladino, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Julia Baly, Principal, DOE, 23 years of service
Brianna Perez, Paraprofessional, DOE, 17 years of service
Jessica Amadeo-Guzman, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Yvette Griffith, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Angeliki Heliotis, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Dawn Klapak, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 15 years of service
Michele Garrett, Teacher, DOE, 19 years of service
Ricardo Alexander, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
James-Edward Germano, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 16 years of service
Kristina Burbes, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
John Sylvester, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Michael Benzinger, Police Officer, NYPD, 20 years of service

Dvora Weinraub, Occupational Therapist, DOE, 21 years of service
Elizabeth Banone, Teacher, DOE, 28 years of service
Stella Jack, Teacher, DOE, 5 years of service
Amanda Donovan, Teacher, DOE, 11 years of service
Jessica Nicchio, Paraprofessional, DOE, 10 years of service
Conni Calia, School Psychologist, DOE, 20 years of service
Jennifer Mortensen, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Joseph Columbia, Firefighter, FDNY, 18 years of Service
Sasha Delgado, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Russell Piazza, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 16 years of service
Steven Stone, Senior Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 30 years of service
Dianne Baker Pacius, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Carin Rosado, Paramedic, FDNY, 10 years of service
Lorraine Masciarelli, Teacher, DOE, 13 years of service
Herendra Pereyra, Teacher, DOE, 16 year of service
Matthew Morris, Firefighter, FDNY, 4 years of service
Salvatore Maita, Firefighter, FDNY, 16 years of service
Frank Calamanco, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 17 years of service
Melanie Smith, Teacher, DOE, 2 years of service
Mitchum Greene, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 16 years of service
Angeles De La Rosa, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Gene Adamowicz, Physical/Occupational Therapist, Peconic Bay Medical, 11 years of service
Sean Fitzgerald, Lieutenant, FDNY, 17 years of service
Chelise Plenty, Speech and Language Therapist, DOE, 18 years of service
Josephine Mazzara, Teacher, DOE, 25 years of service
Laura Salamone, Teacher, DOE, 26 years of service
Curtis Cutler, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 7 years of service
Maria Vicari, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Maria Isabel Ramirez, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Eve Shire, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Corrine Lynch, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Jean Jean, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Lisa Simo, Paraprofessional, DOE, 11 years of service
Henry Wynn, Plumber, DOE, 4 years of service
Rita Flores, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Stacy Ulahel, School Secretary, DOE, 11 years of service
Dorca Iris Genao, Teacher Assistant, DOE, 8 years of service
Patricia Buccellato, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 3 years of service
Brian Smith, Firefighter, FDNY, 19 years of service
Dennis Harrison, Police Officer, NYPD, 15 years of service

Stella Mitchell-Porto, Assistant Principal, DOE, 30 years of service
Paul Schweit, Firefighter, FDNY, 10 years of service
Anthony Figueroa, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 8 years of service
Joseph Starna, Firefighter, FDNY, 5 years of service
Yaditza Rodriguez, Payroll Secretary, DOE, 13 years of service
Russell Piazza, Sanitation Worker, DSNY, 16 years of service
Lisa Medina, Teacher, DOE, 16 years of service
Stephen Jones, Court Officer, NYS Unified Courts System, 6 years of service
Paige Gepes, Paraprofessional, DOE, 10 years of service
Jude Pierre, Firefighter, FDNY, 8 years of service
Ramona Sav Nolan, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Francine Benitez, School Secretary, DOE, 12 years of service
Crystal Salas, Speech and Language Pathologist, DOE, 14 years of service
Damaris Monserrate, Educational Assistant, DOE, 10 years of service
Ayellet Moas, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Eridania Rodriguez, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
James Hoffman, Teacher, DOE, 11 years of service
Alexandria Ziraschi, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Ayse Ustares, Social Worker, DOE, 21 years of service
Bonnie Tortora, Paraprofessional, DOE, 15 years of service
Tammy Hoover, Registered Nurse, United Health Services Hospital, 20 years of service
Joseph DePaola, Firefighter, FDNY, 19 years of service
Angela Velez, Guidance Counselor, DOE, 19 years of service
Maria Haralampopoulos, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Maria Arcodia, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Patricia Catoire, Speech and Language Therapist, DOE, 5 years of service
Travis Carter, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Maria Wohlers, Kitchen School Lunch Aide, DOE, 6 years of service
Brian MacConnell, Teacher, DOE, 3 years of service
Adrianne Urzia, Paraprofessional, DOE, 17 years of service
Carolyn Grimando, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Jamie Hawley, Court Reporter, NYS Unified Court System, 25 years of service
Michellene Barrett, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Joelle McCartney, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Lauren Toscano, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Tiffany Vesterman, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Christina Roeder, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Latanya Collins, Teacher, DOE, 19 years of service
Catherine Morgan-Velez, Senior Court Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 15 years of service
Michele Lawton, Chief Physician Assistant, Northwell Health, 27 years of service

Judy Wright, Ultrasound Technologist, Ascension Lourdes Binghamton, 30 years of service
Krista O'Dea, Rescue Paramedic, FDNY, 17 years of service
Tatiana Bonilla, Teacher, DOE, 5 years of service
Deborah Santiago, Payroll Secretary, DOE, 13 years of service
Kennia Smith, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Lorraine Rodriguez, Paraprofessional, DOE, 6 years of service
Terry Audate, Social Worker, DOE, 10 years of service
Frank Beghin, Teacher, DOE, 28 years of service
Chalanda Walker, Literacy Coach, DOE, 14 years of service
Natasha Henry, Teacher, DOE, 13 years of service
Kevin Thayne, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 15 years of service
Christine O'Reilly, Teacher, DOE, 22 years of service
Sarah Wiesel, Speech and Language Pathologist, DOE, 14 years of service
Michael Dailey, Teacher, DOE, 27 years of service
Michelle Manno, Speech and Language Therapist, DOE, 5 years of service
Diane Montaine, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Michelle Hyatt, Teacher, DOE, 1 year of service
Jacqueline Brown Mayo, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 18 years of service
Kevin Magee, Teacher, DOE, 19 years of service
Maria Mantilla, Occupational Therapist, DOE, 6 years of service
Mariana Argyros, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Christine Gross, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Michelle Alleyne, Sergeant Public Safety, CUNY, 24 years of service
AnaMarie Medina, Teacher, DOE, 27 years of service
Stephanie Dailey, Paraprofessional, DOE, 23 years of service
Caroline Romero, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Jessica Csepku, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Briana Moskowitz, Paraprofessional, DOE, 10 years of service
Barbara Presvelis, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Adrienne Asencio, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 10 years of service
Maria Bookas, School Counselor, DOE, 18 years of service
Alissa Simo, Paraprofessional, DOE, 3 years of service
Christine Arce, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Felicia Hagan, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Stephanie DiCapua, Teacher, DOE, 5 years of service
Meredith Pratt, Court Assistant, NYS Unified Court System, 19 years of service
Paula Smith, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Ivone Angola, Teacher Assistant, DOE, 4 years of service
Deborah Rothschild, Speech and Language Pathologist, DOE, 27 years of service

Nancy Wallace, Licensed Practical Nurse, Sunrise Assisted Living, 24 years of service
Online Borno, Teacher, DOE, 34 years of service
Monica Martin, School Nurse, DOE, 10 years of service
Karen Bianchi, Court Reporter, NYS Unified Court System, 9 years of service
Rosemary Davis, Paraprofessional, DOE, 15 years of service
Remo Dello Loio, Teacher, DOE, 25 years of service
Ora Burke, Teacher, DOE, 5 years of service
Leah Kukla, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Stella Finchum, Teacher, DOE, 26 years of service
Dina Montaine, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Sylvia Valentin, Teacher, DOE, 24 years of service
Lisa Schumacher, Empathy Trainer, NYCHHC, 8 years of service
Nery Morales, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Yenni Morgan, Clinical Assistant, Stony Brook Medicine, 2 years of service
Paulina Makis, School Aide, DOE, 7 years of service
Paul Argento, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 15 years of service
Luz Cruz, Paraprofessional, DOE, 25 years of service
Caroline D'Ambrosio, Registered Nurse, Flushing Hospital Medical Center, 4 years of service
Betsaida Valez, Paraprofessional, DOE, 14 years of service
Cassandra Ynocencio, Teacher, DOE, 12 years of service
Monephia Thompson, Clerical Worker, DOE, 3 years of service
Jack Wei Lin, Emergency Medical Technician, FDNY, 14 years of service
Melomy Johnson, Paraprofessional, DOE, 4 years of service
Angela Morley, School Aide, DOE, 6 years of service
Joanie Giammarino, Speech and Language Therapist, DOE, 15 years of service
Ekaterina Udina, Teacher, DOE, 14 years of service
Donna Noyce, Court Assistant, NYS Unified Court System, 16 years of service
Oscar Bravo, Teacher, DOE, 12 years of service
Steven Clifford, Steamfitter, NYCDOC, 8 years of service
Kristina Bako, Clerical Assistant, NYS Unified Court System, 6 years of service
Jennifer LaBarbera, Teacher, DOE, 19 years of service
Ageliki Heliotis, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Daniel Graham, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Alexandra Kalaitzidis, Teacher, DOE, 3 years of service
Jaime Gibbs, Inpatient Medical Coder, Northwell Health, 3 years of service
Marc Robinson, Police Officer, NYPD, 15 years of service
Cynthia Arvelo, Registered Nurse, NYCHHC, 9 years of service
Roxalana Jordan, Court Assistant, NYS Unified Court System, 6 years of service
Monique Moore, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service

Emilio Edwards, Teacher, DOE, 34 years of service
AnnaRose Carpenito, Ultrasound Technologist, NYCHHC, 26 years of service
Louis Luciano, Clinical/Administrator, Epilepsy Foundation, 9 months of service
Chaim Gertman, Computer Service Technician, DOE, 22 years of service
Adam Waldman, Business Analyst, JP Morgan, 12 years of service
Carlos Cabezas, Health Navigator, Urban Health Plan, 9 years of service
Leticia Edghill, Teacher, DOE, 18 years of service
Chris Kalaitzidis, Food Service Worker, DOE, 17 years of service
Patricia DeCarlo, Teacher, DOE, 19 years of service
Arthur Roldan, Police Officer, NYPD, 19 years of service
Gisele Rentas, Administration Coordinator, Good Shepherd Services, 2 years of service
Linda Jean-Louis, Supervisor Level I, NYCHRA, 21 years of service
Donna Marti, Direct Support Professional, Help On The Way, 3 years of service
Katherine Wynn, Associate Director of Client Engagement, DentaQuest, 6 years of service
Kensha Casimir, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Israel Marti Jr., Science Lab Worker, GoodTemps, 1 year of service
Shawn Olivo, Censored Musician, Self-Employed, 10 years of service
David Burgos, Police Officer, NYPD, 16 years of service
Aqila Norris, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Maryann Massaci, Nurse Practitioner, St. Mary's Hospital for Children, 10 years of service
Anna Vailas, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Dion Powell, Consultant, IAMA CleinBuerger, 2 years of service
Melissa Trama, Guidance Counselor, DOE, 10 years of service
Barbara Coakley, School Aide, DOE, 33 years of service
Ricardo Ruiz Jr., Custodian, NYPD, 14 years of service
Andrea Tichio, Teacher, DOE, 28 years of service
Sharlene Jackson, Licensed Clinical Psychologist, Private Practice, 14 years of service
Veronica Tobjy, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Joseph Forgione, Superintendent, SDNY, 22 years of service
Sara Coombs-Moreno, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service
Maria Cardona, Occupational Therapist, DOE, 17 years of service
Noelle Florio, Teacher, William Floyd Union Free School District, 22 years of service
Joy Amanda: all rights reserved, without prejudice, Paraprofessional, DOE, 8 years of service
Jeremy Ramos, Detective, NYPD, 16 years of service
Eridania Rodriguez, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Edmund Lee, NYC's #1 Street Activist, DJelf7, 30 years of service
Johanna Ulloa, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Marianna Ciaccia-Liss, Teacher, DOE, 25 years of service
Marlon Bethel, Detective, NYPD, 15 years of service
Margaret Florini, Medical Laboratory Scientist, Ascension Health, 6 years of service

Victor Gomez, Deputy Chief Clerk, NYS Unified Court System, 23 years of service
Dahlia Mendoza, Teacher, DOE, 29 years of service
RoseAnna Silvestri-Incantalupo, Paraprofessional, DOE, 6 years of service
Kathleen Wallace, Esthetician, Wave Wellness, 19 years of service
Alejandra Casado, Teacher, DOE, 4 years of service
Cely Decolongon, Sergeant, NYPD, 19 years of service
Maria Forgione, School Secretary, DOE, 17 years of service
Erin Maccheroni, Teacher, DOE, 11 years of service
Ivan Santana, Proofreader, Davis Polk, 2 years of service
Olivia Vosilla, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Amanda Tulier, Registered Nurse, Mount Sinai/St. Luke's Hospital, 9 years of service
Brittany Velazquez, Assistant Principal, DOE, 10 years of service
Tayler Thompson, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 8 years of service
Angelo Petraglia, Senior Threat Analyst, DOITT/NYC Cyber Command, 5 years of service
Craig Smith, Bus Operator, MTA, 31 years of service
John Olley, Communications Technician, AT&T, 3 years of service
Nicoletta Masullo, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Howard Bellingham, Court Officer, NYS Unified Court System, 17 years of service
Jacquelin Reyes, Paraprofessional, DOE, 22 years of service
Genene Tosto, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Alma Guerrero, School Safety Agent, NYPD, 15 years of service
AnneMarie Hickey, SDS Medical Coder, NYU Langone, 7 years of service
Samantha Siano, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Heidi Youn, School Counselor, DOE, 6 years of service
Rey Cortez, Network Service Technician, NYC Office of Labor Relations, 20 years of service
Amie Wales, Registered Nurse, Our Lady of Lourdes Memorial Hospital, 20 years of service
Ronette Savoth, Paraprofessional, DOE, 19 years of service
Henrietta Dudas, Teacher, DOE, 12 years of service
Victoria Arrigo, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Andra Telesford, Registered Nurse, Horizon Healthcare, 5 years of service
Esperanza Castro, Teacher, DOE, 29 years of service
Rafael Adrian Toro, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Alma Guerrero, School Safety Agent, NYPD, 15 years of service
Sandra Wayne, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Diane Capezza, Psychotherapist, Jamaica Hospital, 23 years of service
Athena Clarke, Teacher, DOE, 7 years of service
Carmen Rodriguez, FGP Sec II-Intake/Sched, NYU Medical Center, 9 years of service
Matt O'Leary, eDiscovery Manager, NYCDOI, 5 years of service
Samuel Belhomme, Pharmacy Technician, NYU Langone Medical Center, 3 years of service
Jatna Bobadilla, Associate Confidential Investigator, NYCHHC, 10 years of service

Laurianne Timko, Senior Ultrasound Technician, NYU Medical Center, 22 years of service
 Janet Kalten, Registered Nurse, NYU Medical Center, 15 years of service
 William Hotaling, MRI Technologist, Mount Sinai (Mount Lourdes Hospital), 4 months of service
 Wendy Frey, Radiologic Technologist, Buffalo Hospital, 10 years of service
 Kayla McMillen, Phlebotomist, Our Lady of Mercy Hospital, 7 years of service
 Edward Bender, Radiologic Technologist, Buffalo Hospital, 2 years of service
 Patti Smith, Executive Assistant, United Hospital, 16 years of service
 Sara Pedro, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 16 years of service
 Terri Bligen, Endoscopy Technician, Mount Sinai Hospital of Queens, 32 years of service
 Megan Turner, Registered Nurse, Our Lady of Mercy Hospital-Binghamton, 10 years of service
 Susan Walker, Occupational Therapist, Mount Sinai Hospital, 4 years of service
 Deb Dempsey, Physical Therapist, Mount Sinai Hospital, 15 years of service
 Florangela Mendez, Stroke Unit Clerk, Mount Sinai Hospital of Queens, 22 years of service
 Melanie Weiss, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 15 years of service
 Robert Prawel, Radiologic Technologist, Buffalo Hospital, 8 years of service
 Stephanie DeJohn, Registered Nurse, Buffalo Hospital, 14 years of service
 Renee Eckam, Radiologic Technologist, Buffalo Hospital, 2 years of service
 Amanda McCarthy, Registered Nurse, Buffalo Hospital, 7 years of service
 Theresa Godfroy, Self-Employed Landscaper, 10 years of service
 Bethany Freeman, Registered Nurse, Comprehensive Cancer Cr., 9 years of service
 Jennifer Mason, School Aide, DOE, 6 years of service
 Jolene Ebert, Radiologic Technologist, Buffalo Hospital, 10 years of service
 Elaine Janak, Registered Nurse, Oishe Hospital-Buffalo, 37 years of service
 Iris Moore, Medical Coder, NYU Langone Medical Center, 31 years of service
 Kristina Adams, Speech and Language Pathologist, Mount Sinai Health Services, 15 years of service
 Karen Hellmann, Registered Nurse, United Hospital, 18 years of service
 Calene Gennett, Registered Nurse, Susanna Hospital, 15 years of service
 Xandora Palmisano, Registered Nurse, Mount Sinai Cancer Institute, 10 years of service
 Victoria Russo, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service
 Wendy Cooper, Registered Nurse, Roswell Hospital, 18 years of service
 Sara Baxter, Registered Nurse, The Green Hospital, 15 years of service
 Jessica Schacor-Bennett, Workers Compensation Specialist, NYC Parks, 11 years of service
 Kelly Dixon, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
 Yvette DeLuise, Registered Nurse, Birkenhead Hospital, 3 years of service
 Esfir Viti, Licensed Practical Nurse, St. Vincent Hartford, 6 years of service
 Kathleen Christy, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 15 years of service
 Raina Thorsen, Speech and Language Pathologist, DOE, 16 years of service
 Rosangel and Alex Perez, Podcasters, Indie Media Arts & Entertainment, 13 years of service
 Rosemarie Harrington, Surgical Technologies, NYU Medical Center, 17 years of service

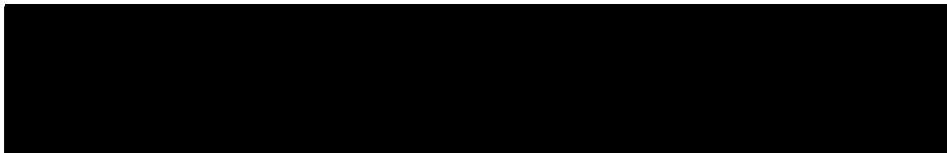
Timothy Collins, IT Programmer, Health Research Inc/Roswell Park Cancer, 15 years of service
Tara McCarthy, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service
Lucille Cravotta, Senior Court Reporter, NYS Supreme Court, 22 years of service
Melanie Bamberger, Occupational Therapy Assistant, Peconic Bay Medical, 7 years of service
Lauren Raiolo, Teacher, DOE, 13 years of service
John Clarke, Gardener, NYC Parks, 18 years of service
Adriana Scalici, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 3 years of service
Renee Butler, Teacher, DOE, 13 years of service
Irina Abramov, Medical Office Representative, Northwell Health, 20 years of service
Amarfi Martinez, EVS Supervisor, Mount Sinai South Nassau Hospital, 11 years of service
Jennifer Bailey, School Safety Agent, NYPD, 17 years of service
Michael DellaRocca, Teacher, DOE, 17 years of service
Megan Fontaine, Registered Nurse, United Health Services, 12 years of service
Andrea Fox, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Mia Torres, CT Supervisor, Mather Hospital Northwell Health, 4 years of service
Nicole Cintron-Dominguez, Teacher, DOE, 10 years of service
Veronica Newton, Registered Nurse, Northwell- Flexstaff, 4 years of service
Shivan Bishun, Teacher, DOE, 2 years of service
Karen La Rosa, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 30 years of service
Katy Walker Mejia, Teacher, DOE, 6 years of service
Angela Bastone-Pergola, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 19 years of service
Patricia MacDonald, Nurse Practitioner, Northwell Health, 15 years of service
Nilberk Kurt, Registrar/Clerk, Staten Island University Hospital, 4 years of service
Christina DellaRocca, Teacher, 8 years of service
Maria Pimentel, Medical Assistant, NYU Langone, 16 years of service
Joy Altrui, Registered Nurse, North Shore University Hospital, 15 years of service
Alison Corley-Dubose, Senior Physician Assistant, LIJ Hospital, 15 years of service
Bob Rettino, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Eugenia Chavez, Teacher, NYCEE, 5 years of service
Karen Cronin, Nursing Assistant, Huntington Hospital, 23 years of service
Julia Shaw, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 14 years of service
Irene Phillips, Social Worker, NYS Office of Mental Health-Queens, 14 years of service
Kelly Davey, Teacher, DOE, 8 years of service
Sarah Haseney, Nurse Practitioner, Northwell Health, 12 years of service
Courtney Venafrro, Paraprofessional, DOE, 17 years of service
Marisol Ventrice, Medical Assistant, Northwell Health-Staten Island, 20 years of service
Nadira Mahabir, Social Worker, Northwell Health, 3 years of service
Charlotte Baysac, Registered Nurse, NYCHHC, 9 years of service
Dawn Spahn, Teacher, DOE, 15 years of service
Jennifer Bardalomas, Medical Coder, United Health Services-Binghamton, 7 years of service

Scott Kobziewicz, Home Health Care Physical Therapist, VNS, 34 years of service
Michele Woodward, Chief Physician Assistant, Northwell's SI Hospital, 27 years of service
Danny Hulkower, Sanitation Worker, SDNY, 6 years of service
Anna Ioffe, Community Assistant, NYCCHR, 4 years of service
Sarah Marino, Paraprofessional, 8 years of service
Dan Settoducato, Corrections Officer, NYCDOC, 8 years of service
Aretha Simmons, Administrative Staff Analyst, NYCDCAS, 17 years of service
Angela SanFilippo, Paraprofessional, DOE, 11 years of service
Elvia Mejia, Stagehand, Peloton Studios, 4 years of service
Andrea Ramsey, Paraprofessional, DOE, 4 years of service
Marianne Bryant, Mammogram Coordinator, NYU Langone, 7 years of service
Rachel Hodge, Teacher, DOE, 3 years of service
Denise Vitale, Paraprofessional, DOE, 17 years of service
Judy Stamos, Occupational Therapist, DOE, 12 years of service
Tom Wiermann, Teacher, DOE, 20 years of service
Anna Marie Restaino, Teacher, DOE, 23 years of service
Dane Bath, Emergency Medical Technician, FDNY, 20 years of service
Marie Mosley, Guidance Counselor, DOE, 22 years of service
Aaron Bennett, Program Coordinator, Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital, 13 years of service
Melissa Saravia Shumilin, Teacher, DOE, 4 years of service
April Tymecki, Registered Nurse, NYU Langone Hospital, 18 years of service
Bing Hui, Medical Interpreter, NYU Langone Hospital, 7 years of service
Sabrina Ross, Certified Medical Assistant, Hudson Headwaters Health, 30 years of service
Danielle Lewis, Radiation Therapist, United Health Services, 18 years of service
Brandee Treadwell, Radiation Therapist, United Health Services, 9 years of service
Genevieve Cortese, Nursing Assistant/Nursing Student, 2 years of service
Emily Bunker, Registered Nurse, United Health Services, 7 years of service
Tatyana Yevsin, Physical Therapist Assistant, United Methodist Home, 20 years of service
Jillian Cullinane, Registered Nurse, Montefiore Medical Center-Bronx, 8 years of service
Ronda Baer, Coding Support Specialist, United Health Services, 20 years of service
Lori Velluzzi, Paraprofessional, DOE, 9 years of service
Immacolata Giocoli-Beaman, School Aide, DOE, 2 years of service
Margaret Roff, Registered Nurse, Northwell Health, 15 years
Gizeht Benitez, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Lauren Danchak, Physician Assistant, Northwell Health/LIJ Valley Stream, 9 years of service
Kimberly Meleski, Reg. Diagnostic Cardiac Sonographer, K & A Radiologic, 39 years of service
Michelle Melendez, Registered Nurse, Syosset Hospital/Northwell, 20 years of service
Annette Brown, Math Coach, DOE, 23 years of service
Elizabeth Parrino, Teacher, DOE, 9 years of service
Kathleen Comack, Teacher, DOE, 34 years of service

Richard Velluzzi, Steamfitter, NYCDOT, 34 years of service
Stephon Bynoe, Teacher, DOE, 21 years of service
Kellie Bilow, Registered Nurse, UVM/Elizabethtown Community Hospital, 27 years of service
Francine Bassett, Licensed Practical Nurse, Saratoga Hospital, 13 years of service
Kathleen Nasnar, Registered Nurse, University of Vermont Health Network, 36 years of service
and many thousands more New York workers too numerous to list here

Cc: All New York State Senators and Assembly Members
Kathy Hochul, New York State Governor
All New York City Council Members
Eric Adams, New York City Mayor
Adrienne Adams, Speaker of The New York City Council
Muriel Goode-Trufant, Corporation Counsel, NYC Law Department
Letitia James, New York Attorney General
New York State Committee on Open Government
Charles Schumer, US Senate Minority Leader, NYS Congressional Delegation
Hakeem Jeffries, US House Minority Leader, NYS Congressional Delegation
House Oversight and Government Reform Committee
American Civil Liberties Union
New York Teachers for Choice
Bravest for Choice
Educators for Freedom
Cops 4 Freedom
Strongest for Freedom
Finest Unfiltered
Medical Professionals for Informed Consent
Court Workers for Choice

Respectfully written and submitted upon consent from the above-named workers and business owners by:

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

From: Edmund [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] NYC RE Denial

Date: Thu, 12 Jun 2025 20:39:19 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Good Evening, my name is Edmund [REDACTED]. My Religious Exemption was denied twice and I was subsequently fired from the NYC Department of Correction. I was employed from [REDACTED] as a Steamfitter and worked in all facilities. I was transferred to Vernon C. Bain Correctional Facility about [REDACTED] and was never notified about RE accommodation from any supervisors. Both of my submitted RE were denied, whereas four other employees RE from the same facility were accepted and have remained currently employed by such agency. Another employee and myself, as far as I know, were the only Two employees fired throughout NYC DoC. I now have a court case 708393/2024 in the Queens County Supreme Court and I am hoping and praying for a victory. I'm attaching a letter from NY Workers for Choice to show our concerns regarding our religious liberty. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,
Edmund [REDACTED]



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

We write to you today as *New York Workers for Choice* (NYWC), an organization representing New York City workers whose religious rights were illegally violated during COVID through the implementation of the City's vaccine mandate. Our religious liberties are still being violated till this day as nearly all of us were never allowed to return to our jobs.

Teachers for Choice, *Bravest for Choice*, *Cops 4 Freedom*, and *Strongest for Choice* makeup NYWC. Together we represent thousands of municipal employees, including teachers, firefighters, cops, sanitation workers and more who suffered brutal religious discrimination in NYC. These are the groups we formed to fight for our rights at City Hall, at the Capitol in Albany, as well as in state and federal courts for the past four years. We have won multiple lawsuits, but NYC has appealed all of our victories keeping us out of work for years.

We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

1. The 2nd Circuit Court of Appeals struck down NYC's policy that denied religious accommodations as facially discriminatory, yet the city never stopped using that discriminatory policy, and;
2. NYC had a policy to deny all religious accommodations that referenced aborted fetal cells used to make COVID vaccines, which clearly targeted Christians with sincere religious objections.

Facially discriminatory policy

One of our lead attorney's is Sujata Gibson of *The Gibson Law Firm*. She has been representing us in multiple lawsuits since September of 2021. The information contained in this letter was gleaned from letters Ms. Gibson has written to various stakeholders regarding our federal cases, namely *Kane v. de Blasio* and *New Yorkers for Religious Liberty (NYFRL) v. The City of New York*.

"In the 17 years I have practiced as a civil rights attorney, I have never seen such blatant examples of religious animus as I have seen the City of New York engage in against my clients and thousands of others similarly situated just like them," said Ms. Gibson.

In the beginning when NYC workers of faith first submitted requests for religious accommodation to the City, rather than assess our requests in good faith, the City adopted a different scheme. It chose to narrow the number of workers accommodated by discriminating against most faiths and only accommodating favored beliefs.

First, the City adopted a facially discriminatory policy and Mayor de Blasio bragged in a press conference that pursuant to that policy, the City would only accommodate Christian Scientists and Jehovah's Witnesses and would reject any personally held beliefs and beliefs of other religions. In *Kane v. de Blasio*, 19 F.4th 152 (2d Cir. 2021), **the Second Circuit held that these policies were not neutral or generally applicable, that strict scrutiny applied, and that plaintiffs were likely to succeed.**

The Appeals Court sent the case back to the lower court to fix this discriminatory policy. The City's "remediation" was to allow their defense attorneys to review the applications and reinstate with back pay any employees found to qualify under legal standards. However the City merely rubber stamped the denials claiming undue hardship, without explaining why 165 similarly situated employees favored under the old discriminatory policy could remain accommodated while those whose beliefs were unconstitutionally barred could not be.

After the Second Circuit struck down the City's policy, the City continued the discrimination against municipal employees. The City not only failed to remediate, but refused to repudiate the "stricken standards" - as they are referred to in related litigation - and even began offering them as an option in nearly every City department.

Alternatively, those whose religious beliefs were not favored under the stricken standards could appeal to a "Citywide Panel" **run by the City's defense attorneys in the Kane case.** Subsequent discovery in related cases has shown that the Citywide Panel applied discriminatory standards as well, continuing to discriminate against personally held or idiosyncratic beliefs and those grounded in an objection to the use of aborted fetal cell lines in the production or development of the vaccines, and arbitrarily applying an unsupported "undue hardship" defense to many applications.

Aborted Fetal Cells

Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

There are so many additional facts surrounding the horrors that people of faith were put through in NYC. One of the few silver linings to this nightmare has been that we have attracted the best legal minds in the country to our defense, namely *Alliance Defending Freedom (ADF)*, *Children's Health Defense (CHD)*, *Nelson Madden Black*, and *The Gibson Law Firm*.

Nevertheless our nightmare continues as the courts move extremely slowly. Many of us have lost our homes, apartments, mortgages, gotten divorced or filed for bankruptcy. We have been forced to leave the city, leave the state, and some have even been forced to leave the country!

We know of multiple men forced into homelessness from being fired over the vaccine mandate; two of them are immigrant men of color. And tragically we know of one suicide.

What has happened to people of faith in New York City must never happen again. We urge the Religious Liberty Commission to take all actions at its disposal to help us before more of us lose our homes, go bankrupt, or tragically lose life entirely.

Thank you so much for your time and attention to this matter. All praise to the most high God in all glorious forms;

Sincerely;

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Aura Moodey, *Teachers for Choice*
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Matthew Connor, *Bravest for Choice*
Sophy Medina, *Bravest for Choice*
Arthur Roldan, *Cops 4 Freedom*
John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Christina [REDACTED] PII >

To: "RLC (OASG)" <[REDACTED] PII >

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Religious Exemption Discrimination in NYC

Date: Thu, 12 Jun 2025 20:20:59 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: New_York_Workers_For_Choice_Final_Religious_Liberty_Commission.pdf

Dear members of the religious liberty convention,

My name is Christina Roeder and I was a tenured NYC Department of Education high school teacher for 7 years. I worked in a Manhattan and Queens high school prior to and during the COVID 19 pandemic. I was not only teaching remotely but going in person to teach during the lockdowns doing as I was advised to do. I had high natural immunity to COVID 19, having gotten the virus from work. When NYC DOE decided to mandate the Covid 19 vaccine for all teachers I submitted proof of my natural immunity for a medical exemption and I also wrote a letter to submit for a religious exemption. The NYC DOE only allowed 1 or the other. I was told I could not apply for a religious exemption since I had submitted a medical exemption. My medical exemption was denied and they would not accept my religious exemption because they claimed I was too late. I made numerous phone calls and sent many emails back and forth with the DOE as well as the United Federation for Teachers union, letting them know that the entire process was unjust and there should be no expiration date for my religious liberty. I sent my religious exemption letter via certified mail since they blocked me from sending it via their online portal. I received an email saying I am denied from sending a religious exemption. I hope that the NYC can be reprimanded for their actions and not be allowed to continue going against the constitution and against religious liberty for all. Please see attached letter from my fellow New York workers for Choice who have been fighting along side me. Thank you in advance for your time.

Christina [REDACTED]

[Sent from Yahoo Mail for iPhone](#)



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission;

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We would like to draw the commission's attention to two of the many horrendous violations of religious liberty that occurred in NYC during the COVID crisis, which are:

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Further discovery also shows that the Commissioner of Health in NYC issued a letter instructing that employees with concerns about aborted fetal cell lines be denied accommodation based on the Commissioner's view that the concern lacked merit in light of the fact that some religious leaders were vaccinated anyway. **This is a square violation of the Establishment Clause which prohibits the government from taking sides in religious questions.** We will happily provide a copy of this letter from the NYC Commissioner upon your request.

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George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs



New York Workers for Choice

Email: [REDACTED] PII

June 12, 2025

TO: Religious Liberty Commission
c/o White House Faith Office
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
NW Washington, DC 20500

Sent via email to: [REDACTED] PII

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John Macari, *New York's Finest: Retired & Unfiltered Podcast*
George Garvey, *16 Strongest for Choice*

***The eight of us sign representing thousands of NYC workers fired for their sincerely held religious beliefs

From: Jacob Dell <[REDACTED]>

To: "[REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>

Cc: [REDACTED]

Subject: [EXTERNAL] Written Testimony to the DOJ Religious Liberty Commission To Restore Religious Exemptions to Vaccine Mandates

Date: Mon, 09 Jun 2025 17:50:17 -0400

Importance: Normal

Attachments: Written_Testimony_to_Religious_Liberty_Commission_09JUN2025.pdf

To the Office of the United States Associate Attorney General:

Please see attached my written testimony submitted in advance of Monday's meeting of the Commission in Washington, DC, which I plan to attend in person.

The Rev. Jacob W. Dell, Pastor
The First Congregational Church of Woodbury

[REDACTED]
Address

Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

Mobile: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

Website: <http://www.firstchurchwoodbury.org/>

Sermons: <https://jwdell.substack.com/>

I do not solicit money by email or text. E-mails or texts, supposedly from me, soliciting money or asking you to buy gift cards for someone in need, are a scam. Look carefully at the email address from any email that purports to be from me.

Sent with [Proton Mail](#) secure email.

The First Congregational Church
AND THE FIRST ECCLESIASTICAL SOCIETY OF WOODBURY

Address

Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

PII

THE REV. JACOB W. DELL, PASTOR

To: The Religious Liberty Commission
U.S. Department of Justice
Office of the Associate Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Avenue NW, Room 5706
Washington, DC 20530

PII

CC:

PII

PII

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Dear Members of the Religious Liberty Commission:

As a pastor in Connecticut, serving families whose religious rights have been curtailed, I urge the Commission to prioritize restoring vaccine religious exemptions in Connecticut, Maine, California, New York, and West Virginia. Religious liberty is a cornerstone of our nation, and protecting the ability of families to make faith-based decisions about their children's health and education is essential to upholding this fundamental right.

The [REDACTED], members of my congregation, exemplify the challenges faced by many faithful families due to Connecticut's 2021 removal of the religious exemption to vaccines. Guided by their Christian convictions, rooted in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 and 2 Corinthians 7:1, [REDACTED] believe the aggressive childhood vaccine schedule conflicts with their duty to protect their children's bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit. While their eldest child was grandfathered into the exemption, their younger two children are barred from attending school, childcare centers, and summer camps due to the family's faith-based decision to abstain from vaccines. This has forced them to homeschool, significantly reducing their income and increasing expenses for curriculum and enrichment activities. Several other families in my congregation and community, that I am aware of, face similar hardships, forced to choose between violating their faith, homeschooling, or relocating.

The elimination of religious exemptions infringes on the right to practice one's faith freely, particularly when parents, guided by faith and medical evidence, believe vaccines pose a risk to their children's health. Religious liberty demands that families have the choice to align medical decisions with their beliefs without sacrificing access to education or social opportunities for their children. This policy forces families into an untenable choice. The Commission has a critical opportunity to advocate for policies that restore these exemptions in affected states and protect them in others, ensuring no family is penalized for their faith.

As a pastor, I witness daily the importance of faith in guiding families through difficult decisions. To underscore the urgency of this issue, I plan to attend the Commission's public hearing in person at the World Stage Theater, Washington, DC, on June 16, 2025. Restoring religious exemptions will not only benefit families in Connecticut but also set a precedent for protecting religious liberty nationwide.

Thank you for your commitment to advancing religious liberty. I pray that your work will strengthen the role of faith in our nation and support families in living according to their deeply held convictions.

Sincerely,

(The Rev.) Jacob W. Dell
Pastor, The First Congregational Church
and The First Ecclesiastical Society of Woodbury, Connecticut

Address

Woodbury, Connecticut 06798

PII

PII

Submitted: June 9, 2025, via email