

Nebraska State Legislature

SENATOR CAROL BLOOD

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COMMITTEES

**Vice Chairperson - Business and Labor
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Urban Affairs**

August 23, 2021

Governor Pete Ricketts
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 94848
Lincoln, NE 68509

Dear Governor Ricketts,

I'm writing today in regards to a recent job listing for registered nurses in Bellevue that will be employed by the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs. That "no mandated COVID-19 vaccinations" was prominently placed in the job description is of grave concern to myself and countless people in my district that have reached out to me over this listing.

I'm sure you are aware that The Department of Veterans Affairs is now requiring that all medical personnel get vaccinated against COVID-19 now that the highly contagious Delta Variant is quickly moving across the United States and accounting for most new cases of COVID. This includes dentists, nurses, physician assistants, chiropractors and others who work in these facilities and provide direct care to patients or visit the facilities.

In contrast, US Veterans Affairs Secretary Denis McDonough had stated that, "Whenever a Veteran or VA employee sets foot in a VA facility, they deserve to know that we have done everything in our power to protect them from COVID 19."

This is especially concerning knowing that recently, (see attached) nearly sixty medical organizations joined together stating that all healthcare workers should be vaccinated against COVID-19 yet Nebraska is actively encouraging those who are not vaccinated to come and work with our veterans.

I do understand that we have a serious shortage of staff. We also know that a part of these shortages are systemic issues under management. We've all received information from existing and past employees concerned with the workplace environment. With that said, putting those who live in these facilities at risk because we need to find bodies to hire is not acceptable.

It is my hope to receive a response as to why the state feels this is an acceptable option and the reasoning behind the decision to allow unvaccinated staff into our facilities by this Friday, August 27th, so I might be able to respond appropriately to anyone concerned about this issue..

Thank you in advance for your response. I know you, too, are concerned when it comes to the best interest of those who have served our great nation.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Senator Carol Blood". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the typed name.

Senator Carol Blood
District 3

Cc: John Hilgers, Director of the Nebraska Department of Veterans Affairs