

BRIAN J. MAST  
18TH DISTRICT, FLORIDA

COMMITTEE ON TRANSPORTATION  
AND INFRASTRUCTURE

FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

2182 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-3026

171 SW FLAGLER AVENUE  
STUART, FLORIDA 34994  
(772) 781-3266

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515-0918**

January 4, 2021

General David H. Berger  
Commandant of the Marine Corps  
3000 Marine Corps Pentagon  
Room 2C253  
Washington, D.C. 20350

Dear General Berger,

I write regarding the discharge of Marines for their non-compliance with COVID-19 vaccination requirements and the potential impact of these separations on USMC readiness, particularly as the United States faces growing military challenges from competitors in Eastern Europe and East Asia.

I understand that as of December 30, 2021, the U.S. Marine Corps has separated a total of 206 Marines for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine. Further, USMC has not granted a single religious exemption of the 3,247 it has thus far processed, despite USMC having a higher vaccination rate than all countries except the United Arab Emirates. The consistent denial of religious exemptions strongly indicates that further separations are forthcoming. Therefore, I request a disclosure of the Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) of each of the 206 Marines discharged for refusing the COVID-19 vaccine, as well as the MOS for each of the 3,247 Marines who have been denied religious exemptions.

As the world's preeminent naval power, the United States has relied upon the Marine Corps to form the tip of the spear in nearly every modern conflict. With heightened tensions arising from Russian mobilization on the Ukrainian border and increased Chinese pressure on Taiwan, I have serious concerns about the Marine Corps maintaining its operational lethality and flexibility if it were to separate more than a Regiment worth of Marines.

I request the MOS of the aforementioned Marines to determine how the implementation of the COVID-19 vaccination order impacts the Marine Corps' readiness and its ability to carry out its mission. I further wish to register my concern over these discharges' potential impact on future USMC recruiting. To date, about a quarter of the U.S. population has, thus far, opted not to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

Our nation is made strong by our military's ability to effectively deter our opponents and, when needed, wage war in pursuit of our national security. We share the goal of ensuring that our military is superior to all challengers, and so I look forward to learning the MOS of each of the Marines so far discharged and facing discharge for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

Sincerely,



Brian Mast  
Member of Congress