Office of Senator Jon Tester  
311 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-2604

Senator Tester,

As business leaders, we take the health, safety, and welfare of our employees seriously. Included in that sober responsibility, we take Covid19 seriously and closely follow CDC guidance. Beyond federal guidance, we take additional precautions and measures, including promoting voluntary Covid19 vaccinations, such as paid time off, financial bonuses and other incentives.

President Biden’s forthcoming vaccine mandate, targeting businesses with 100 or more employees is a devastating blow to our economic recovery efforts and individual efforts to promote voluntary vaccinations among our employee base. The arbitrary number established for employee count puts businesses at a competitive disadvantage with businesses that do not meet the 100-employee count.

In Montana, with an unemployment rate of 3.5%, we are already facing a crippling workforce shortage. The President’s mandate threatens our workforce retention efforts as those close to retirement age may exit the workforce entirely and others shift to businesses that do not meet the President’s employee threshold.

While details are forthcoming, it is clear compliance will create confusion, uncertainty, and disruptions. A quick assessment of major challenges includes employee identification and communication, record retention, conflicts with existing state and federal regulations, remote and rural employee realities, cost, testing capacity and test turnaround timing.

With high consumer demand and unprecedented federal stimulus, the President’s vaccine mandate has the potential to upend an economy straining to meet demand and undermine good faith efforts to encourage voluntary vaccinations.

On behalf of businesses representing tens of thousands of employees, we encourage you to leverage your seniority to work with the Administration to pursue vaccination goals that do not burden Montana business and exacerbate workforce challenges.

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