



SECRETARY OF WAR  
1000 DEFENSE PENTAGON  
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1000

MAR 20 2026

MEMORANDUM FOR SENIOR PENTAGON LEADERSHIP  
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS  
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOW FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Reinforcing Our Commitment to Service Members Negatively Impacted by the  
Defunct Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Mandate

The Department remains steadfast in its commitment to honor every warrior separated under the rescinded coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) vaccine mandate. The Department of War has taken decisive action to reinstate those who wish to return to Military Service. We are reviewing the records of those who were assigned less than fully honorable service characterizations, to restore, as appropriate, eligibility for GI Bill benefits to those who rightly earned them.

While I am proud of our efforts over the past year, our obligations to make things right are not complete. I am therefore directing the Under Secretary of War for Personnel and Readiness (USW(P&R)) to extend the application of the Department's reinstatement and return to service guidance established in Official Performing the Duties of the Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Memorandum, "Updated Guidance on the Correction of Military Records for Service Members Involuntarily Separated for Refusal to comply with Coronavirus Disease 2019 Vaccination Requirements," from April 1, 2025, until April 1, 2027.

To further encourage the return of experienced and dedicated Service members, the Department has re-evaluated the service commitment required for reinstatement. Effective immediately, the active-service obligation for individuals returning to service under this guidance is reduced from 4 years to 2 years. This change reflects our confidence that returning members make an immediate and positive impact, and it aligns our reinstatement policy with the needs of both the Service members and the Military Services. This modification will be incorporated into all future reinstatement agreements.

This policy change also applies to those Service members who have already been reinstated and committed to a 4-year service obligation. The Secretaries of the Military Departments are directed to provide these members the opportunity to modify their existing agreements to reflect a 2-year service commitment, subject to the needs of the Military Service concerned for those Service members who have, since reinstatement, executed permanent change of duty station orders at Government expense. Except for those members who received a bonus in exchange for an obligation to serve more than 2 years, those members who elect this option will have fulfilled their service obligation upon completion of 2 years of service from their reinstatement date.

Given this policy modification, and to ensure that each individual whose career was cut short under the COVID-19 vaccine mandate receives the respect and attention that they deserve,



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I direct the Secretaries of the Military Departments to report to the USW(P&R), within 60 days of this memorandum, the status of their recontact efforts for those who have not rejoined already and inform them of this opportunity to return to service.

Together, we will right the wrongs and correct the injustices of the past.

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of the letters 'RBH' followed by a long, sweeping horizontal line that curves upwards at the end.