



City of Covington
16720 SE 271st St. Suite 100
Covington, WA 98042

City Hall – 253.480.2400
www.covingtonwa.gov

February 2, 2022

King County Executive Dow Constantine
King County Council
King County Chinook Building
401 5th Avenue, Suite 800
Seattle, WA 98104

Dear Executive Constantine,

As local elected leaders we stand with King County's goal of keeping our communities safe. We appreciate the work our first responders, medical professionals and Sheriff's office have done during this pandemic. Their jobs have been made more difficult due to the ever-evolving needs of the communities during this time as we are trying to navigate COVID-19.

During this time, a vaccine mandate was instituted for all county employees to be complied with by October 18, 2021. According to the King County Temporary COVID-19 Personnel policy from January 12, 2022, it states that "Employees may make requests for a reasonable accommodation based on a medical disability or for sincerely held religious beliefs." However, it appears that no such accommodations have been given for those who have a medical disability, i.e., unable to receive the vaccine due to medical complications, or for religious beliefs. This includes a police officer with two letters from two separate independent doctors stating that they cannot get the vaccine due to the allergic reaction they would receive from any of the vaccine options.

We share in the County's desire to make our communities safer and understand the difficult decisions that the Executive Department must make. However, by not allowing for a testing option in the vaccine mandate The King County Sheriff's Office is set to lose a substantial amount of its force due to the vaccine mandate. Cities such as Covington, Maple Valley, SeaTac, and Newcastle, along with King County Metro and Sound Transit will be unable to ensure timely responses to crimes such as domestic violence, property crime, and more.

We are asking that you add a testing option for these employees who cannot get the vaccine. The need in our communities for these first responders is critical as we are seeing increased crime statistics across numerous categories. Again, we as local leaders stand firmly with King County in making our communities safer and ask that we do not discriminate against employees as we strive to make our county safer.

Sincerely,

Covington City Council

Mayor Jeff Wagner, Mayor Pro Tem Sean Smith
Councilmembers Elizabeth Porter, Jared Koukal, Joseph Cimaomo Jr., Kristina Soltys, and Jennifer Harjehausen

growing toward **greatness.**