

OPPOSE

SB839-Maryland Voluntary COVID-19 Vaccine Passport

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I urge you to oppose SB839. Vaccine passports are unscientific and not supported by the current scientific evidence. The studies below in relation to the COVID vaccinations should make decision makers question their assumptions that the vaccinated can be excluded as a source of transmission. It is also negligent to ignore the vaccinated as a source of transmission when deciding about public health control measures.

-An article in Lancet Regional Health EU highlights that high COVID-19 vaccination rates have not reduced transmission of SARS-CoV-2 in populations by reducing the number of possible sources for transmission and thereby reduced the burden of COVID-19 disease. Recent data indicates that the epidemiological relevance of COVID-19 vaccinated individuals as a source of transmission is increasing, as there are fewer unvaccinated and more people are naturally immune. (The epidemiological relevance of the COVID-19-vaccinated population is increasing. Günter Kampf, LETTER | VOLUME 11, 100272, DECEMBER 01, 2021.)

-Another paper out of the UK shows that fully vaccinated individuals with breakthrough infections have peak viral loads similar to the unvaccinated, and that fully vaccinated individuals can efficiently transmit infection in household settings. (Community transmission and viral load kinetics of the SARS-CoV-2 delta (B.1.617.2) variant in vaccinated and unvaccinated individuals in the UK: a prospective, longitudinal, cohort study. Lancet Infect Dis. 2021.)

-In yet another report by the Robert Koch Institute, it was shown that In Germany, the rate of symptomatic COVID-19 cases among the fully vaccinated (“breakthrough infections”, reported weekly since 21, July 2021) was 16.9% at that time among patients of 60 years and older. This proportion has increased weekly and was 58.9% on October 27, 2021. This provides clear evidence of the increasing relevance of the fully vaccinated as a possible source of transmission (Robert Koch-Institut. Wöchentlicher Lagebericht des RKI zur Coronavirus-Krankheit-2019 (COVID-19). AKTUALISIERTER STAND FÜR DEUTSCHLAND July 22, 2021.)

-In the UK, a similar situation shows among citizens of 60 years or older, the fully vaccinated accounted for 89.7% of the SARS-CoV-2 cases versus 3.4% among the unvaccinated (UK Health Security Agency. COVID-19 vaccine surveillance report. Week 4328. October 2021.)

-A report out of Israel reports a nosocomial outbreak involving 16 healthcare workers, 23 exposed patients and two family members. The source was a fully vaccinated COVID-19 patient. The vaccination rate was 96.2% among all 248 exposed individuals (151 healthcare workers and 97 patients). Four of the 248 people, fourteen fully vaccinated patients became severely ill or died, and two unvaccinated patients developed mild disease (Nosocomial outbreak caused by the SARS-CoV-2 Delta variant in a highly vaccinated population, Israel, July 2021. Euro Surveill. 2021; 262100822.)

Vaccine passports are also unethical and not supported by the public. Allowing businesses and organizations to VERIFY status for entry is DISCRIMINATION, both religious and medical, as well as to those that are socioeconomically disadvantaged. Such a move will have real and lasting social and

economic consequences to any state, county, down to individual families. There are real privacy concerns as well with Maryland's health data recently compromised. Creating an internationally compatible system of this kind would only make Marylanders' private health information more vulnerable.

Furthermore, endorsing the discriminatory practice of vaccine passports and financing the needed technology is unacceptable and fiscally irresponsible. This legislation will have a huge financial burden on the state and may cut into funding that could be used for critical health initiatives.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Jacquelin Zubko-Cunha
