

On January 26, 2022, at 27 weeks pregnant, I was terminated from my position at the College of Southern Maryland (via email) for not receiving the COVID-19 vaccine. The termination occurred after the submission of a medical exemption form filled out by my doctor. This form requested a deferral of vaccination until after the delivery of my baby in April.

It is my responsibility as a mother to protect and make the best decisions for my child's health and safety. Due to the lack of long-term evidence and studies on the effects of the vaccine on fetuses/ babies I am uncomfortable receiving a COVID-19 vaccine while pregnant.

According to an article in Vaccines (an international, peer-reviewed, open access journal) "vaccine safety for this demographic, as well as for the developing fetus and neonate, remains to be determined. A global effort has been underway to encourage pregnant women to get vaccinated despite the uncertain risk posed to them and their offspring. Most COVID-19 vaccine reactions include injection site erythema, pain, swelling, fatigue, headache, fever and lymphadenopathy, which may be sufficient to affect fetal/neonatal development."¹

The above information, along with additional information in support of my exemption, was provided to the College of Southern Maryland prior to my termination.

I believe a person's vaccination status should not determine their employment status. I hope HB0799 passes so other pregnant women do not have to choose between a healthy pregnancy and baby and their job.

Thank you,

Taylor Kiessling

¹ Karrow NA, Shandilya UK, Pelech S, Wagter-Lesperance L, McLeod D, Bridle B, Mallard BA. Maternal COVID-19 Vaccination and Its Potential Impact on Fetal and Neonatal Development. *Vaccines*. 2021; 9(11):1351. <https://doi.org/10.3390/vaccines9111351>