

HB0699 FWA

HANNAH HERCHE

SYKESVILLE, MD, 21784

Right before the first week of my junior year classes at Salisbury University in 2021, I received a call stating that I had to quarantine for 14 days due to being exposed to the COVID19 virus. I regularly tested myself and regularly tested negative. Upon calling my campus health center about my continuous negative tests, I was told it was “protocol” and there was nothing I could do about it. A few weeks after returning to class, I get another call stating that I must quarantine for another 14 days due to another exposure. Again, testing negative for the full 14 days. This totaled to 28 days I was out of class and isolated. This resulted in having to drop my class due to lack of attendance, and not being able to keep up with material. I had to pay to retake the class the following semester, putting me behind on my path to graduation. There were no exceptions for my negative tests due to the fact I was unvaccinated. Students who were vaccinated were only required to quarantine for 5 days and could return to class. This bias was not only seen through protocol, but I was also discriminated for my decision to not get vaccinated. I was forced to wear a mask when my vaccinated peers were not. I had to get tested on campus twice a week in order to be “cleared” on campus, while my vaccinated peers were only required to test once before each semester. My status was flagged on the attendance list in each of my classes. This gave professors insight on my medical privacy. These mandates put in place, greatly impacted my mental health and made me question my decision to go to a university. Ultimately these mandates never prevented the spread of the virus, or kept anyone “safe”. All the mandates did were limit my freedoms under the guise of keeping the community safe.