Governor Brad Little
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December 16, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd J. Austin III
Secretary of Defense
U.S. Department of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Secretary Austin,

As Governor and Commander in Chief of the Idaho National Guard, I write to express grave concern regarding the COVID-19 Mandate for Guardsmen. In my role, I am tasked with ensuring that the men and women of the Idaho National Guard are treated with respect in their service to their state and country. I acknowledge your right and need to establish readiness standards for the National Guard. However, members of our 116th Cavalry Brigade Combat Team are already in the middle of a deployment cycle that has been disrupted by a lack of clarity regarding this new readiness requirement.

Your memorandum dated November 30, 2021, threatens to jeopardize the federal recognition for those states not meeting these newly implemented readiness requirements. I believe this move sets a dangerous precedent for the strong relationship that exists between the states and Department of Defense.

Furthermore, there is lack of consistency between the Army and Air Guard's date requirements and waiver guidance. The Secretary of the Air Force, in a memorandum dated December 7, 2021, explicitly warns of punitive discharge proceedings in the event of noncompliance. This message is dangerous as all measures related to personnel actions should be placed at the desk of the states' adjutant generals.

For these reasons, I strongly request clarity and control of the directives from your office and the Service Secretaries concerning National Guard members in the State of Idaho.

Sincerely,



Brad Little
Governor of Idaho