Local 528 Response to Vaccine Mandate

Governor Inslee recently issued a state-wide mandate requiring most state and federal employees and all health care workers in Washington State must be fully vaccinated against the Covid-19 virus by October 18th, 2021, or risk losing employment with their employer. This mandate applies to both private and public sector workers, which includes all state and federally funded construction projects, over 60,000 state employees, 14,000 King County employees, and 10,000 City of Seattle employees.

The Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons International Association (OPCMIA) Local 528 want its members to understand that representation, protection of health, job security, and member rights are paramount to the local and its affiliates. Local 528 has taken the position that each member has their own choice to be vaccinated or not.

Local 528 wants its members and their families to fully understand that:

- Local 528 understands the importance of public health guidelines and encouraging the advancement of overall public health, however, protection of rights and individual choice is equally important and we do not believe the Covid-19 vaccination should be a requirement of employment.
- Local 528 is against any member/individual who has been deemed “essential or non-essential” throughout this unfortunate pandemic, thus losing their employment status for refusing to get the Covid-19 vaccine. Local 528 supports freedom of choice, especially regarding refusing vaccination due to religious beliefs or existing medical conditions.
- Local 528 believes that a mandatory vaccine policy is a subject of mandatory bargaining, along with related topics such as: Discipline & Discharge, Testing of Employees, Health and Safety, and Management Rights.
- Local 528 will continue to adhere to and enforce the terms of the current collectively bargained agreement to represent our members with signatory contractors and government municipalities. Local 528’s position is based on the notion that the states unilateral requirement of a vaccine mandate without bargaining in good faith before implementation would be considered an unfair labor practice (ULP).

Local 528 will continue to represent its members job security, their rights under Federal & State Law and signatory contractors. We will promote freedom of choice, employee/employer rights, and safe working environments - as the nation continues to combat the Covid-19 virus. Local 528 intends on participating in the development of a solution to the vaccine mandate with Government entities, local industry employers, area building trades, and employees that is in accordance with current Collectively Bargained Agreements, Federal & State workers’ rights, and Public Health Entities.

Should any employer signatory with Local 528 seek to implement a vaccine mandate, including by direction or requirement of a project owner, Local 528 hereby demands the right to bargain both that decision and the effects of any such decision on behalf of our membership.

Regards,

Eric Coffelt, Business Manager/Financial Secretary

OPCMIA, Local 528

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