

NEWS RELEASE



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More B.C. Public Servants Speak Out Ahead of Injunction Hearing

VICTORIA – More B.C. public servants facing termination due to the province's proof of COVID-19 vaccination mandate are sharing their stories ahead of a court hearing to stop the firings.

WATCH *NEW Testimonials* - BC Public Service Employees Speak Out:

- [Florence](#) – Public Safety and Solicitor General
- [D. \(name withheld\)](#) – Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- [Louisa](#) – Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

The petition for court injunction and judicial review, the first part of which is scheduled to be heard in B.C. Supreme Court on March 21, argues that the [government order](#) authorizing the proof of vaccination mandate is unconstitutional and should be quashed. Nine non-union B.C. public servants have joined the petition to date, with more expected to join in the coming days from a larger group of over 500 union and non-union BC Public Service employees. Arguments for the constitutional case are expected to be heard at a 2-day hearing in May.

BCPS Employees for Freedom, a group formed in October last year in response to the mandate, supports the court action and in recent weeks has released video testimonials of employees affected by the mandate. The latest round features:

- [Florence](#), a mother and B.C. Corrections Officer from the Lower Mainland who has had her mental health, family and career prospects negatively impacted by the mandate and is on leave without pay;
- [D. \(name withheld\)](#), an Employment & Assistance Worker from Central B.C., who opposes the mandate but is still working and got vaccinated unwillingly to keep her home and support her family; and

- [Louisa](#), a 24-year BC Public Service employee, wife, mother and aortic dissection survivor from Oliver who is remaining strong in spite of facing imminent termination as her family's sole income earner.

"These stories provide a window into the lives of tens of thousands of public sector workers across the province who have been impacted by this mandate," said the group's spokesperson. "B.C. now appears to be the only province in Canada intent on terminating public servants for not proving their COVID-19 vaccination status. It's time to end the mandate and allow dedicated B.C. public servants to go back to work."

BCPS Employees for Freedom says the union representing most B.C. public servants, the B.C. General Employees' Union (BCGEU), has failed to stand up for workers, but hopes they will soon change their position.

"The BCGEU so far has not represented workers facing termination because of this mandate, but with attitudes toward COVID policy shifting across the country, most jurisdictions abandoning mandates and restrictions, and even health officials in this province advocating for the end of harmful policies, like what Vancouver Coastal Health wrote to UBC a few weeks ago, we hope the union leadership will have a change of heart and decide to fight for their members."

On February 16, 2022, the Chief Medical Health Officer and Vice-President of Public Health for Vancouver Coastal Health Authority, Dr. Patricia Daly, [wrote to Dr. Santa Ono](#), President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of British Columbia, to recommend that the university abandon its plan to de-register students for not proving their COVID-19 vaccination status. Daly noted that such a measure, if pursued, "may result in profound negative harms on [students'] future health and wellbeing, by impacting future educational and career opportunities, and their mental health."

On February 28, 2022, the UBC Board of Governors [announced](#) it would no longer require rapid testing or vaccine declarations, except as required by Public Health.

BC Public Service Employee Personal Stories

B.C. public servants from a wide range of professional backgrounds and government ministries have agreed to speak with BCPS Employees for Freedom Media on camera or have their audio testimony recorded. Their stories have been made into video clips for the public. Only employees' first names or initials are used, and all testimonies have been prepared in accordance with the BC Public Service [Oath of Employment](#) and [Standards of Conduct](#).

Florence - Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General

Florence has been a B.C. public servant for 4 years, working as a correctional officer for the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General in the Lower Mainland. During her time with the BC Public Service and the B.C. General Employees' Union (BCGEU), Florence feels she has made a difference in the lives of the people she works with. She also got along well with her co-workers and felt respected by management. However, since the mandate was introduced, her experience has changed. "I feel like I'm being treated like a second-class citizen." Her mental health has been negatively impacted and she has felt forced to consider an unexpected career shift. "I would like everybody to know I am healthy, I am eager to work, ready to work." Florence, a mother of young children, has been put on unpaid leave for three months and expects to be terminated at any moment.

D. - Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction

D. (name withheld) has been with BC Public Service for 7 years and lives in Central B.C. In her role with the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, she helps B.C.'s most vulnerable citizens access income assistance. When the mandate came in, she experienced confusion and anxiety. "I just knew in my heart this wasn't right for me". It wasn't easy for D. to make the decision she felt forced to make. "I went and got my vaccines for one reason and one reason only and that was to keep my job, to keep my family in our home". She continues working in her role today.

Louisa - Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries

Louisa lives in Oliver, B.C., and has been with the BC Public Service for 24 years, working for the last 11 with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries. When the pandemic first hit, Louisa was asked by her management to find a way to keep their largely paper-based office functioning while her colleagues worked from home. She continued to work in the office throughout the pandemic. When the mandate came, Louisa, an aortic dissection survivor, knew a treatment that could possibly affect her heart would be a problem. "I don't sleep very well. I get panic attacks where I can't breathe." Despite this difficult time in her life, Louisa has to be strong for her family. A devoted mother and wife, Louisa is on unpaid leave and expects termination at any moment.

Learn More:

BCPS Employees for Freedom is a non-partisan public service employee group seeking an amicable solution on behalf of its members with their employer. The group is a growing association of more than 500 B.C. public servants from a wide range of professional backgrounds and disciplines, and includes both management and regular employees. Collectively, we have many hundreds, if not thousands, of years of faithful public service behind us, and we look forward to performing many more. We are trying to follow the right process to resolve our current employment situation by writing and communicating with our employer, public officials and the public, and undertaking legal action only as a last resort.

BCPS Employees for Freedom Media

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