

## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
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### **\$25,000 Donation to BCPS Employees for Freedom**

VICTORIA – BCPS Employees for Freedom Society (BCPSEF) has received a \$25,000 donation for its legal challenge against the provincial government’s ongoing proof of COVID-19 vaccination mandate for its 38,000 public service employees.

#### **WATCH \*NEW Employee Testimonials\* - BC Public Service Employees Speak Out**

- [Ana María](#) – Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development
- [James](#) – Public Safety and Solicitor General
- [Angela](#) – Public Guardian and Trustee

The donor, who asked to remain anonymous and disclosed they were vaccinated, was moved to donate after their family member was terminated from the BC Public Service for not proving they received two doses of a COVID-19 vaccine. The donor’s family member was forced to sell their home so they can leave the province with their family to find new work.

“[This] is probably the most immoral act I have seen in my lifetime,” said the donor. “Now I see people I know moving to the U.S. or to Alberta to escape this government. Simply so they can have a personal health choice. It’s not the way it should be. We now live in the only province that has not rectified this wrongdoing.”

On April 8, 2022, the Province lifted all remaining COVID-19 restrictions, including the BC Vaccine Card for entry into public venues including restaurants, bars and movie theatres. However, the BC Public Service still requires its employees to show their digital ID BC Vaccine Card to work, regardless of their position. All other provinces and territories in Canada, including the federal government, have since rescinded their COVID-19 vaccine mandates and called employees placed on leave back to work.

BCPSEF is bringing a constitutional legal challenge against the provincial government’s executive [Order in Council 627](#) and the BC Public Service’s [Human Resources Policy 25](#) which make proof of COVID-19 vaccination mandatory for public servants. The Society is also filing a

Section 12 Labour Relations Code complaint against the B.C. General Employees' Union for failure to represent its tens of thousands of members in the matter.

Raising the funds necessary to cover legal costs has been a key priority for the Society.

"Knowing others care enough to support our legal action, especially with a donation of this magnitude, is very reassuring and beyond anything we imagined," said the group's fundraising and promotion lead.

"We hope this donation will encourage other concerned citizens to support our legal challenge as this case affects the employment rights of all Canadians and everyone's lives here in B.C. We're all seeing how the firings of thousands of health care workers and other public servants have affected our health care wait times, ferry sailing cancellations and other critical public services. We can't afford to lose any more public servants in this province due to these senseless mandates."

BCPSEF Society is represented by attorney Umar Sheikh, the former CEO of the BC Nurses' Union. In a [recent tweet](#), the Society has said they are prepared to take their case all the way to the Supreme Court of Canada if necessary.

For BCPSEF's latest financial contributor, concern for the treatment of their fellow citizens and the loss of a cherished idea of what it means to be Canadian have inspired them to support the organization's mission.

"I grew up to have great pride in Canadian values that champion inclusion and tolerance of others with different backgrounds and views, but I cannot reconcile these values with how our province and country are treating Canadians now who simply want medical choice and privacy. It has deeply injured my belief in Canada as a human rights leader and as a place to live."

### **BC Public Service Employee Personal Stories**

B.C. public servants from a wide range of professional backgrounds, government ministries and organizations have agreed to speak with BCPS Employees for Freedom Media and share their stories. 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](#).

### **Ana María – Ministry of Forests, Lands, Natural Resource Operations and Rural Development**

[Ana María](#) has been a B.C. public servant since 2012 and is a Registered Forest Technologist based in the Chilliwack natural resource district. She came to Canada 22 years ago from her native Colombia, seeking a better life. A survivor together with her family of the Delta variant, Ana María was taken aback by the BC Public Service mandate for employees when it was announced. "Coming from a country where for many decades there has been more than a struggle – a human challenge – with political forces," she questioned where this policy was

going. A single mother of three sons, Ana María now works in the Service Deli Department at Costco. “The first two days I kind of felt like I went back 22 years.” She doesn’t know if she will work as a B.C. public servant again.

### **James – Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General**

[James](#) has worked as a Correctional Officer at a corrections centre in the Okanagan for more than 2 years. He has had a rewarding experience working in corrections and was planning to retire with the B.C. Public Service. Since the mandate came to effect, James and a number of his coworkers were put on leave without pay. He has learned about negative comments made about him and his coworkers in the workplace. “They’re saying we’re not to be taken seriously because we refused to comply and that’s our own fault that we’re losing our jobs.” This situation has had major impacts on his mental health, particularly with depression, which he has suffered for several years. Some of the people he has worked with are respectful of his decision. “They respected me for standing up for what I believe in”. James is still not allowed to go back to work.

### **Angela – Public Guardian and Trustee**

[Angela](#) has been a B.C. public servant for 25 years, recently serving with the Provincial Guardian and Trustee in Vancouver. In her role as a paralegal, Angela worked to protect the interests of B.C.'s most vulnerable citizens. During the past 2 years, she was able to do most of her work from home. Angela did not feel comfortable disclosing her private medical information to her employer. Her family immigrated to Canada from Hong Kong 35 years ago looking for a new life. She feels the situation she now finds herself in is surreal and has brought back the concerns that made her family emigrate in the first place. Angela believes a medical procedure should be an individual’s choice and is disappointed with her union (the BCGEU) for not standing up for her rights. Angela expects to be terminated at any moment.

### **Learn More**

BCPSEF is a registered not-for-profit society that stands for medical privacy and bodily autonomy of all peoples in British Columbia, as protected by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

### **BCPS Employees for Freedom Media**

Website: [bcpsforfreedom.com](http://bcpsforfreedom.com)

Twitter: [BCPS Employees for Freedom](https://twitter.com/BCPS_Employees_for_Freedom)

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