



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew J. Lanza

Staten Island Elected Officials & Community Leaders Announce Lawsuit Against New York City Vaccine Mandate

ANDREW J. LANZA August 6, 2021



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Today Congresswoman Nicole Malliotakis (NY-11) joined local elected officials and community leaders in announcing a lawsuit against New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio's unfair COVID-19 vaccine mandate and passport initiative.

Under the Mayor's recent executive order, New York City will become the first U.S. city to require proof of vaccination for a variety of activities for city employees and customers, including indoor dining, gyms, entertainment, and performances. The lawsuit, led by St. George attorneys Louis Gelormino and Mark Fonte on behalf of local restaurants and gyms, claims de Blasio's executive order violates several HIPAA and privacy laws.

"The Mayor's vaccine mandate is an overreach of government," **said Congresswoman Malliotakis.** "The government should not be imposing such a mandate on its people and small business owners. We have received calls from countless individuals that we represent - both vaccinated and unvaccinated - who are concerned about sharing personal health information with individuals they don't know, or fearing they will be left out of society because their doctors recommended they do not get vaccinated due to other medical issues. It is beyond ridiculous that the government is mandating these already struggling small business owners to be the city's 'vaccine police.' I'm here today with my colleagues, constituents, and community leaders to say to the Mayor: rescind this vaccine passport requirement or we will sue you. We will not accept this type of government control and intervention in our lives."

"There is absolutely no science that supports this policy," **said New York State Senator Andrew Lanza.** "The leadership in this state, the Democrats, have already proven to be unworthy of our trust," "New York fared worse than any other state in America when it came to the pandemic. These people do not deserve our trust. "

"Government should not tell you what to do with your body and your health," **said New York State Assemblyman Michael Reilly.** "I have a long history of auto-immune disease on both sides of my family. I don't want to take that chance. I still have antibodies from when I had COVID in August of last year. That's something that this administration, both at the city and the state level failed to acknowledge. My natural immunity keeps me safe and it keeps all those who had COVID safe."

"I'm vaccinated and my entire family is vaccinated," **said New York State Assemblyman Michael Tannousis.** "We are not anti-vaccination, we are pro-common sense. That's what this is about. We're standing here today to tell you as elected officials, attorneys, and business owners are standing up for common sense and the people of this city."

"Talk to your own primary care doctors and make the best choice for you and your family," **said New York City Councilman Joe Borelli.** "This is a long-term restriction that's going to happen in New York City restaurants unless we fight it. There is no hope for New York restaurants as long as people like Bill de Blasio have unbridled control over who can go into a restaurant and who can't."

"We're here because we represent the hardworking people of Staten Island, New York City," **said Staten Island Borough President Candidate Vito Fossella.** "If there is no compromise, if there is not a reflection and a withdrawal of this ridiculous, unconstitutional edict from the powers that be, then we will sue you. We're standing up for freedom."

"I want to thank former President Donald Trump who was the one that started Operation Warp Speed; he's the reason that we had the vaccine in record time and the reason we were able to reopen as quickly as we have," **said David Carr on behalf of New York City Council Minority Leader Steven Matteo.** "The vaccine has been a success and I encourage those who are thinking about it to talk to your physicians and decide if it's the right choice for you. It's

unconscionable to divide our citizens into classes based on their personal health decisions."

"Why are restaurants and gyms being singled out unfairly as opposed to other businesses?," **said Attorney Mark Fonte.** "Who is the Mayor and his cronies to tell us that we have to divulge our own personal health care decisions to a restaurant? What happened to confidentiality laws? What happened to HIPAA? With a stroke of a pen do these confidentiality laws no longer apply? It's government overreach - from the powers of city hall across the bay to Tottenville. The government is too far involved in our lives and too far involved in our businesses. Our lawsuit is seeking to reassert the principle that government does not tell us what to do; we tell the government what to do."

"The U.S. Fitness Coalition is not anti-vaxxers," **said Charlie Cassara, Head of the U.S. Fitness Coalition.** "We are in the business of keeping people healthy and fit through proper nutrition and exercise. We help people improve their immune systems so they can live a more productive life. We are not the police. We are not the extended arm of the state, city, or any local politician to do their bidding. We do not segregate people for any reason. It is not our job as fitness professionals to turn anyone away. The city does not have the right to tell us who we can serve for any reason - that decision is up to us as private business owners."

"I myself have been vaccinated, but it was my personal choice for personal reasons," **said John Vitale, a veteran and former NYPD officer.** "Mr. Mayor, who are you to try and force your will on the great citizens of New York City? You were not elected to take away our freedoms and ultimately shred the constitution."