

117TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. R. 5967

To ensure that institutions of higher education with COVID–19 vaccination requirements provide an opportunity for religious exemption from such requirements, and for other purposes.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NOVEMBER 15, 2021

Mr. NORMAN (for himself, Mr. DUNCAN, Mr. GOOD of Virginia, Mrs. MILLER of Illinois, Mr. LAMBORN, and Mr. BABIN) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Education and Labor

A BILL

To ensure that institutions of higher education with COVID–19 vaccination requirements provide an opportunity for religious exemption from such requirements, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Protecting Religious
5 Students from Vaccine Mandates Act of 2021”.

1 **SEC. 2. PROVISION OF RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION FROM**
2 **COVID-19 VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS.**

3 (a) **RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION REQUIREMENT.**—A pub-
4 lic institution of higher education that has a COVID-19
5 vaccination requirement shall, through December 31,
6 2024—

7 (1) provide a reasonable opportunity for an in-
8 dividual to receive a religious exemption from such
9 vaccination requirement; and

10 (2) make a good-faith effort to notify individ-
11 uals who are subject to such vaccination requirement
12 of the opportunity to receive, and procedures to
13 apply for, such a religious exemption, using easily
14 accessible forms of communication such as the
15 website of the institution or official digital or written
16 correspondence from the institution to such individ-
17 uals.

18 (b) **ANNUAL REPORT.**—An institution of higher edu-
19 cation described in subsection (a) shall submit to the Sec-
20 retary of Education an annual report, for each calendar
21 year through 2024, that—

22 (1) certifies that the institution meets the re-
23 quirements under paragraphs (1) and (2) of such
24 subsection; and

25 (2) in the case of an institution that has denied
26 such a religious exemption to 20 or more individuals

1 during a calendar year, includes reasoning for such
2 denials by such institution, whether the exemptions
3 were denied due to an undue hardship for the insti-
4 tution, and if so, evidence to demonstrate such
5 undue hardship to the Secretary of the Education.

6 (c) ENFORCEMENT.—

7 (1) IN GENERAL.—Unless the Secretary of
8 Education has determined that an institution of
9 higher education is unable to comply with the re-
10 quirements under subsection (a) due to an undue
11 hardship for the institution based on evidence pro-
12 vided in accordance with subsection (b)(2), a public
13 institution of higher education that has a COVID-
14 19 vaccination requirement and that fails to comply
15 with the requirements under subsection (a) shall not
16 be awarded Federal funds for any purpose, directly
17 or indirectly, including through a contract or sub-
18 contract, except that students at the institution may
19 receive Federal student financial aid.

20 (2) SUNSET.—The authority to enforce compli-
21 ance with the requirements under subsection (a)
22 shall expire on December 31, 2024.

23 (d) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this Act
24 shall be construed as discouraging institutions of higher

1 education from promoting or offering COVID–19 vaccina-
2 tions on campus.

3 (e) DEFINITIONS.—In this section:

4 (1) COVID–19 VACCINATION REQUIREMENT.—

5 The term “COVID–19 vaccination requirement”
6 means any requirement by an institution of higher
7 education that, as a condition for enrollment, at-
8 tendance, receipt of student aid, participation in ath-
9 letics or other student activities, or employment at
10 the institution, requires an individual to have re-
11 ceived one or more vaccinations intended to prevent
12 or mitigate the virus that causes COVID–19.

13 (2) INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION.—The
14 term “institution of higher education” has the
15 meaning given such term in section 101 of the High-
16 er Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1001).

17 (3) RELIGIOUS EXEMPTION.—The term “reli-
18 gious exemption” means an exemption granted to an
19 individual to permit such individual to be exempted
20 from a COVID–19 vaccination requirement of an in-
21 stitution of higher education if such individual dem-
22 onstrates that receiving such a vaccination would
23 violate the sincerely held religious beliefs of the indi-
24 vidual.

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