



For Immediate Release

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Washington Public Service Unions Release Joint Statement as Negotiations Proceed on Vaccine Mandate

Olympia, Wash – The Washington Federation of State Employees/AFSCME Council 28 (WFSE) will begin negotiations with the State of Washington on Monday to address the governor’s vaccination mandate. Six of the state’s largest unions representing impacted employees—WFSE, WEA, SEIU Local 925, Teamsters Local 117, PROTEC17 and AFT Washington—released the following joint statement:

“We encourage our members to get vaccinated. This is both a workplace safety issue and a public safety issue. Ever since the vaccines first became available, we have worked to get our members access to the shots. Since then, we have worked to inform them about vaccine safety and effectiveness. And today, the vast majority of our members have already chosen to get vaccinated. It’s in everyone’s best interest to do whatever we can to end this pandemic.

“We also have an obligation to our members who have not yet been vaccinated for legitimate reasons. Many employees have significant questions and concerns about the implementation of this mandate. They may have health conditions, including previous severe reactions to vaccines. They may not be able to afford to miss work to be vaccinated or to recover from possible side effects. These members are counting on us to protect their interests. That’s why we are insisting on negotiating the impacts of vaccine requirements and accommodations employers could provide to achieve our common goal: increasing workplace safety. It’s one of the benefits of having a union — workers have a voice on policy changes like this.

“We are optimistic about the speed in which the state has come to the table, and we intend to ensure our rights to bargain this mandatory subject are respected.”

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