



## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Monday August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### Professional Firefighters of Southern Arizona Statement on COVID-19 Vaccine Mandates

The Professional Firefighters of Southern Arizona adamantly supports our member's freedom of medical choice, giving them the "right to choose" whether to be vaccinated or not. We respect that everyone has their own opinion about the vaccine and will advocate for their right to decide the best options for themselves and their families.

Firefighters across the United States have been on the front lines battling COVID-19 since the beginning, when there was little known about the risks to themselves or their families. Much has been learned about COVID since then and many of the current standards for patient care, PPE precautions and spread prevention have been developed directly from their service. Furthermore, our fire departments and districts have already established an effective system of voluntary vaccinations, detection, treatment, and contact tracing of COVID among our firefighters and emergency medical response personnel. That system has been very successful in keeping outbreaks minimized so firefighters are available to respond to emergencies in our communities. Contrary to that, vaccine mandates will force the men and women our communities depend on for emergency services to be terminated or give up their freedom of choice when it comes to their own health. This will only compound our current staffing issues, subsequently providing less emergency resources to the public; in a healthcare system that is already taxed we need every first responder possible so we can continue to adequately answer the community's calls for service.

The Professional Firefighters of Southern Arizona is unwavering in the belief that our membership must retain the ability of a personal choice on receiving the vaccination or not. As shown above, our firefighters are intimately aware of the risks associated and through research and experience we are confident that each member can make the best decision for themselves and their families.

We hope we can count on you to stand with us on this very basic civil right and American liberty. We are asking that you remain committed to your firefighters retaining their choices on personal and private medical decisions.

Respectfully,

The Professional Firefighters of Southern Arizona

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