



Hon. Mayor Bowser & Dr. Nesbitt,

We are writing to you as business leaders, residents, and community members of the District of Columbia. We also are writing to you as fervent believers in the importance of public health and the role of vaccinations in defeating this pandemic - in fact, everyone who has signed this letter is fully vaccinated.

In reading the latest situational update and guidance issued for DC, we were surprised to see that gyms and fitness studios were mandated to require masks, rather than have the option of operating in a vaccine-only capacity - particularly given Dr. Nesbitt's emphasis on the rarity of breakthrough cases amongst a vaccinated-only group during yesterday's press conference.

As owners and operators of these spaces, we are intimately aware of the impact of this mandate. Our businesses are disproportionately impacted by mask mandates, as clients are put off by the idea of working out with a mask, potentially limiting their ability to breathe easily while they do physical activity.

We are also dismayed by this mandate - as it disproportionately impacts the fitness industry while having no to minimal impact on others. For example, it seems counterintuitive for our clients who on a Saturday night can stand literal inches away from other individuals in a crowded bar with a drink in their hand without a mask on, but who on Monday morning - even in a fully vaccinated fitness class or gym - are required to exercise with a mask on.

We are asking the city to support the fitness industry in allowing us to operate our businesses in a vaccine-only capacity rather than imposing a mask mandate during class, with strict documentation checks that come with the benefit of being able to work out without a mask. If our collective goal is to raise the percentage of our community that is fully vaccinated, then we believe it is time that we start taking additional steps to change the societal incentive structure such that accessing all of the spaces that we know and love is more challenging to do if you are not fully vaccinated.

We respectfully ask that you consider our proposal, and look forward to hearing back from you soon.

