



January 7, 2022



I write to you today in good spirits of the season to raise your awareness of a dire issue: your organization is breaking the law. In your well-meant attempt to follow President Biden's (struck down) vaccine mandate, Verizon has created a situation which is infringing on one of our member's civil rights, breaking both the Minnesota Human Rights Act as well as the Civil Rights Act. I'll explain.

The laws require you treat all people the same, regardless of many facets, including religion (which the Supreme Court has determined includes atheism). This means that allowing or withholding special privileges to your employees based on religion is religious discrimination and illegal.

Your organization is about to fire our member **Patrick Wilmers** for noncompliance with your vaccine mandate, while your religious non-compliers are allowed to keep their jobs with weekly testing. They all have objections, but only the religious people get to keep their jobs; the atheists are being fired, as a matter of policy, without affording them the same options being offered to religious people.

That's religious discrimination, and it's illegal.

- It does not matter that Verizon Wireless is following a Biden initiative. That initiative has been ruled illegal and is not in force.
- Religious people who get tested weekly are equally safe for your other employees as atheists who get tested weekly.
- By allowing only religious people to stay (with tests), you are effectively thinning the atheists from your employment ranks. Whether or not this is by design, it will be the effect, and again, is neither moral nor legal; you don't get to keep your job just because you're religious.
- Minnesota precedent follows Minnesota law: 121A.15 HEALTH STANDARDS;
   IMMUNIZATIONS; SCHOOL CHILDREN, Subd. 3. 'Exemptions from immunizations' allows





vaccine exemptions for "conscientiously held beliefs", as opposed to "religious beliefs" (Like VZW has). This avoids religious discrimination by granting the same rights to everyone.

you must not fire Mr. Wilmers while others get to keep their jobs simply because they believe in God. He is willing to follow exactly the same procedures as his religious counterparts in order to keep his position with you; he does not want to lose his job.

The solution is simple: Mr. Wilmers must be allowed to keep his job under the same conditions as religious people. Verizon Wireless must immediately adopt a "conscientiously held beliefs" policy which mirrors the State of Minnesota's vaccine mandates, instead of only allowing religious exemptions. This will immediately rectify the problem and avoid legal difficulties.

On that note, I also need to say that Atheists for Liberty is dedicated to this cause and this member, and we will support his legal challenges against Verizon Wireless should they infringe on his livelihood in a discriminatory matter.

Once again, I wish you good tidings of the season and recognize your difficult and unanticipated situation, but this is far more difficult for Mr. Wilmers, and we are trying to work with you to ensure minimal damage to everyone involved.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this matter. As you know, Mr. Wilmers is scheduled to be released soon, so please respond via email no later than January 21.

Sincerely,

David Silverman
Atheists for Liberty

CC:

Members of the press
Published on the Internet as an Open Letter

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://www.revisor.mn.gov/statutes/cite/121A.15