

**From:** [Nicole Thomas](#)  
**To:** [Joseph P. Filippi](#)  
**Subject:** State Board of Health 8/10/21 Public Comment  
**Date:** Thursday, August 5, 2021 11:21:50 AM

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Good Morning,

Please see the Public Comment below that I would like to submit for the 8/10/21 Board of Health Meeting. If you need any further information from me, please let me know. Thank you!

"Good afternoon Board Members, my name is Nicole Thomas and I am the President of the Graduate and Professional Student Association at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. I represent over 4,000 graduate and professional students at our university. While my opinion cannot possibly encompass every opinion on our campus, I believe that one of the fundamental tenets of being a strong leader is to work toward a solution based on scientific evidence and factual information.

The COVID-19 vaccines work— we know that they work, we have scientists and doctors and public health experts telling us that they work. If we truly value peer-reviewed consensus, if we are confident in the science, then we should be mandating vaccines. Without a vaccine mandate, we, as an institution, are sending the message that it is okay to bow to a small amount of political pressure, fear, and misunderstanding.

Enforcing a vaccine mandate will greatly decrease the odds of this pandemic lasting even longer— it will decrease the odds of students and faculty getting sick, and it will definitely decrease the number of deaths that will result from unvaccinated infections and transmission. We know each of these things to be true. The top 25 colleges and over 600 institutions also know that this is true, and have implemented vaccine mandates— they have, of course, faced backlash— but honestly, what policy hasn't?

The fact of the matter is that we owe this to our students and our faculty to keep them safe. We owe it to our immunocompromised peers, who are relying on vaccinated folks to keep them safe. We owe it to my colleagues in the College of Education, who consistently work in classrooms with students under the age of 12. We owe it to the students who are parents to kids that can't get vaccinated yet. We owe it to all of the individuals who did the right thing, who followed what the government suggested and who got vaccinated, working hard to keep themselves and their peers safe.

It may be a difficult decision to implement, but it will undoubtedly save lives in the long run. I strongly encourage you to follow the science and to support a vaccine mandate for all NSHE campuses. Thank you for your time and consideration. "

Best Regards,  
Nicole Thomas

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