



National Association of Government Employees

AFFILIATED WITH THE SERVICE EMPLOYEES INTERNATIONAL UNION

December 11, 2020

Governor Charles Baker
State House, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Dear Governor Baker:

Thank you for your leadership in rolling out the vaccination plan for the Commonwealth earlier this week. As we consider our members, many of whom have been serving in front line capacities with public facing jobs since the beginning of the pandemic, I urge your support for affording our Court Officers and Probation Officers the same access as Police, Fire and emergency medical workers.

I know that Chief Justice Carey and Court Administrator Williams have made a similar request to ensure that Trial Court staff are protected through phase one access to vaccination. I appreciate their leadership and join them in their advocacy as the Trial Court works to maintain its statutory obligation to the provision of justice for the citizens of the Commonwealth. To that end, it is imperative that our Court Officers and Probation Officers be afforded the protections required to ensure that the Trial Court can meet its obligation effectively and safely.

The vaccination plan makes clear that Police and Corrections Officers will be included in the phase one roll out. As critical links in the chain of custody it is imperative that Court Officers and Probation Officers be granted phase one vaccination access. Court Officers and Probation Officers have been exposed to the same risks as other public safety officials and will continue to be exposed to those risks during the course of the pandemic.

As always, I am available to discuss this matter with you in person. Thank you again for your continued strong leadership during this tough time, and for your consideration in ensuring that our loyal and dedicated Trial Court employees receive the protections they need to do their jobs safely and effectively.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David J. Holway', written over a large, stylized flourish that extends to the right and then curves back down towards the signature.

David J. Holway
National President



**THE TRIAL COURT OF MASSACHUSETTS
EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE TRIAL COURT**

John Adams Courthouse
One Pemberton Square, 1M
Boston, MA 02108

Paula M. Carey
Chief Justice of the Trial Court

Jonathan S. Williams
Court Administrator

December 3, 2020

Governor Charles Baker
Massachusetts State House
24 Beacon Street, Room 280
Boston, MA 02133

Re: Massachusetts Trial Court COVID-19 Vaccinations

Dear Governor Baker:

As you face the daunting task of prioritizing the statewide delivery of the COVID vaccine, we respectfully request that you consider providing access to early stage vaccination for the frontline staff of the Massachusetts Trial Court who are ensuring access to justice for Massachusetts residents at 97 courthouses across the state.

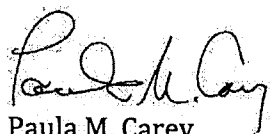
In alignment with the Baker-Polito Administration's comprehensive plan to safely reopen our economy and ease social restrictions while minimizing the health impacts of COVID-19, the Trial Court has continued to deliver justice through judicial orders and the establishment of health and safety protocols for all court locations, staff and court users. Courthouses have remained open for in-person critical business, such as child custody and domestic violence cases, that require essential Trial Court personnel at all courthouses, while also managing other business through virtual technology solutions. Of course, certain proceedings must be conducted in person as guaranteed by our state and federal Constitutions.

Given the current COVID-19 infection rate in Massachusetts and the country, the Trial Court is experiencing an extraordinary increase in the number of employee and court user exposures, positive test rates among employees, and the need to close courthouses for disinfecting. Now more than ever, it is critical to have appropriate Trial Court support and resources in place to respond to the operationalization of safe court operations as the pandemic continues.

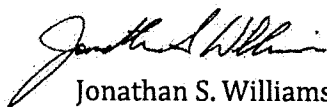
We appreciate that the COVID-19 vaccination supply is limited based on early release/approval and recommendations by the COVID-19 Vaccine Advisory Group. We feel that it is imperative that Trial Court staff receive access to early vaccination in order to preserve a critical function of society. We hope you will agree that court operations staff be considered part of the state's critical infrastructure, given their role in assuring accessibility, fairness, and increased efficiency within the justice system.

Trial Court staff should be designated as workers in an essential and critical industry in order to receive the vaccine at an early stage because they are in a high-risk role, as reflected by current data. Early vaccine access is critical not only to protect them and the court users they serve but also to maintain the essential services they provide to the Commonwealth.

As the Commonwealth and the MDPH Office of Preparedness and Emergency Management coordinates, assesses, and implements the state's COVID-19 Vaccination Plan, we thank you for thoughtfully considering this request.



Paula M. Carey
Chief Justice of the Trial Court



Jonathan S. Williams
Court Administrator

cc: Marylou Sudders, Secretary of Health and Human Services
Robert Ross, Chief Legal Counsel