By:  Hall S.B. No. 98

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT

relating to COVID-19 vaccine mandates and the application of COVID-19 vaccine exemptions to certain employees.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF TEXAS:

SECTION 1.  Subchapter A, Chapter 161, Health and Safety Code, is amended by adding Section 161.0015 to read as follows:

Sec. 161.0015.  COVID-19 VACCINE MANDATES AND EXEMPTIONS. (a) In this section, "governmental entity" means this state, a local government entity as defined by Section 418.004, Government Code, or an agency of this state or a local government entity.

(b)  A governmental entity may not implement, order, or otherwise impose a mandate requiring an individual, other than an employee of the governmental entity, to be vaccinated against COVID-19.

(c)  A governmental entity shall not deny an employee of the governmental entity an exemption from a required COVID-19 vaccination based on a medical condition or reasons of conscience, including a religious belief.

(d)  An individual or employee who is the subject of a violation of Subsection (b) or (c), as applicable, may bring an action in a district court in the county in which the violation occurred for injunctive relief to prevent further violation of the applicable subsection.

(e)  A claimant may recover reasonable expenses incurred in bringing an action under Subsection (d), including court costs, attorney's fees, investigation costs, witness fees, and deposition expenses.

SECTION 2.  Section 161.0015, Health and Safety Code, as added by this Act, applies only to conduct that occurs on or after the effective date of this Act.

SECTION 3.  This Act takes effect January 1, 2022.