

Tennessee Business Roundtable opposes efforts to ban companies' mask or vaccine mandates

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The House meets at the state Capitol in Nashville on June 1, 2020. (Erik Schelzig, Tennessee Journal)

The Tennessee Business Roundtable says it opposes efforts to either require or prohibit company COVID-19 rules.

“The Tennessee Business Roundtable opposes federal or state laws interfering with an employer’s management decisions concerning COVID vaccinations or mask mandates,” according to a policy decision adopted Friday morning. “Employers should be free to run their businesses without unnecessary government interference.”

The statement comes as some Republicans have called for emulating Texas Gov. Greg Abbott in trying to ban companies from requiring customers or employees wear masks or be vaccinated. Rep. Bruce Griffey (R-Paris) this week denounced those who support businesses’ authority to decide such matters themselves as “medical Nazis.”

A special session penciled in for Oct. 27 could address the issue.

The state group’s position appears to be at least partially at odds with its national counterpart, which includes the chief executives of some of the country’s and Tennessee’s largest employers like Amazon, Home Depot, and Walmart. The national Business Roundtable has voiced support for President Joe Biden’s vaccination requirement for companies with more than 100 employees.