

+
○ • **A PRELIMINARY OVERVIEW
OF UNION RESPONSES TO
WORKPLACE VACCINE
MANDATES IN CANADA**

Labor and Employment Relations Association
January 6-8, 2023, New Orleans, LA

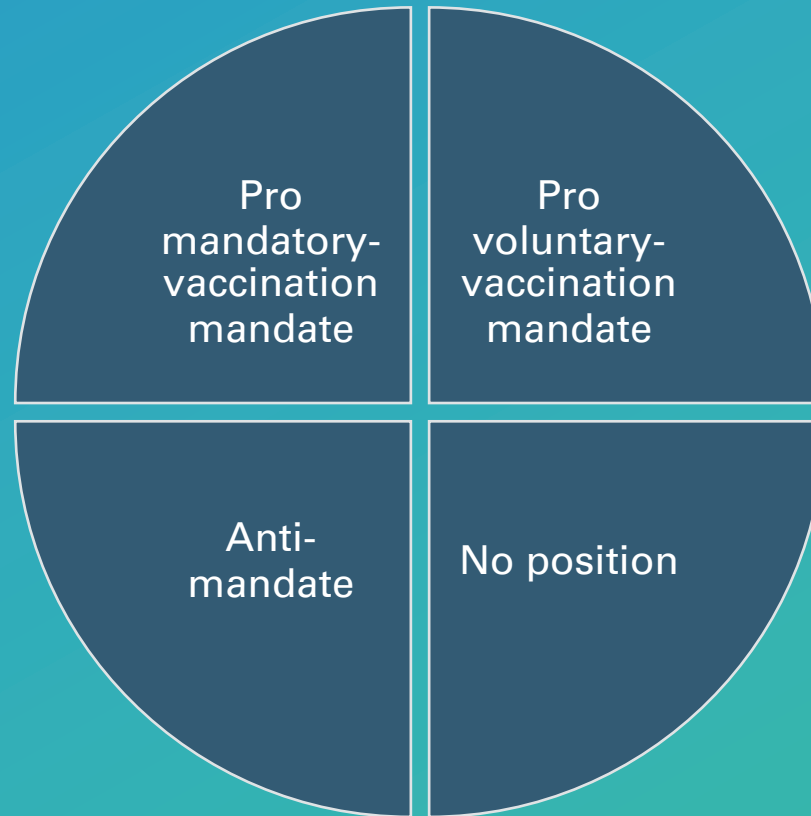
Alison Braley-Rattai and Larry Savage
Department of Labour Studies, Brock University



Overview

- The issue of workplace-based vaccine mandates was thrust into the media spotlight in 2021 and has proven very divisive within unions
- Media accounts focused on differences among union positions
- We challenge the “for” or “against” framing of unions positions offered by media outlets
- We develop a typology that presents differences in positions as revolving around which *type* of policy to accept

Typology of union responses



Substantive vs. rhetorical differences

Substantive

- “Fault line” within labor movement was overstated
- No clear sectoral patterns
- Very few unions adopted a pro-mandatory vaccination policy position and none adopted an anti-mandate position

Rhetorical

- Several unions targeted as anti-vax because of opposition to employer-initiated vaccine mandates
- Several unions who rhetorically took pro-mandatory mandate positions were actually promoting voluntary-vaccination policy positions



Further research

- What considerations informed various unions' internal discussions enroute to developing their respective stances regarding workplace vaccine mandates?
- Next steps: conduct interviews with elected union officials and union staff