

The Journal Gazette

Braun's police outreach to Chicago rings hollow

October 23, 2021

U.S. Sen. Mike Braun's welcome message to Chicago cops unwilling to adhere to their city's COVID-19 vaccine mandate is a head-scratcher.

Our junior senator, a Republican, proudly proclaimed this week the officers should cross the Illinois border and join police forces in Indiana.

“My office stands ready to help connect Chicago police officers to an Indiana police department that is hiring now and doesn't have a vaccine mandate,” Braun told Fox News.

He later tweeted that “many Chicago police interested in serving Hoosiers” had contacted his office.

Police in Chicago have been butting heads with city officials over rules requiring a shot or twice-weekly coronavirus testing. Refusal to comply with either results in being placed on no-pay status, and 21 officers were there as of Tuesday.

Reluctance to take simple steps to protect and serve citizens amid a deadly pandemic raises questions about what other kinds of rules they won't follow.

Welcoming the rule-breakers to Indiana also is a bit of an about-face for Braun, who introduced a bill last year to reform qualified immunity – the often-criticized legal doctrine that shields police and other public officials from lawsuits.

Braun's measure would have scaled back protections for officers from lawsuits alleging actions such as excessive force.

“This is, to put it mildly, a very ambitious proposal,” the Cato Institute, a libertarian think tank, wrote on its website at the time.

So, following the rules is only necessary sometimes?