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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

December 9, 2025

Dear Chairman Cassidy:

We write to urge you to schedule an oversight hearing as soon as possible with respect to the actions Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. has taken as Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) to undermine the health and well-being of the American people and people throughout the world.

Since assuming office, Secretary Kennedy has waged an unprecedented war on science and vaccines that have saved millions of lives.

He has directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to publish false information on its website suggesting that childhood vaccines cause autism despite the findings of more than 40 scientific studies in seven countries involving over 5.6 million people that there is no link between vaccines and autism.¹

He has spread misinformation about the safety and effectiveness of the measles vaccine during the largest measles outbreak in the U.S. in over 30 years.²

He has removed the Director of the CDC who refused to rubber stamp his dangerous and unsubstantiated vaccine recommendations.³

He has defunded promising vaccine research that will leave us woefully unprepared for future pandemics and public health emergencies.⁴

He has packed a critical scientific body, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), with vaccine deniers, completely upending the rigorous scientific process for reviewing

¹ Sheryl Gay Stolberg, *Kennedy Says He Told C.D.C. to Change Website's Language on Autism and Vaccines*, N.Y. TIMES (Nov. 21, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/11/21/us/politics/rfk-jr-cdc-vaccines-autism-website.html>; Melissa Jenco, *AAP: 'Stop wasting government resources to amplify claims' about vaccines, autism*, American Academy of Pediatrics (Nov. 20, 2025) <https://publications.aap.org/aapnews/news/33818/AAP-Stop-wasting-government-resources-to-amplify?searchresult=1?autologincheck=redirected>.

² Teddy Rosenbluth, *Remedy Supported by Kennedy Leaves Some Measles Patients More Ill*, N.Y. TIMES (March 25, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/25/health/measles-kennedy-vitamin-a.html>.

³ Restoring Trust Through Radical Transparency: Reviewing Recent Events at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Implications for Children's Health, Hearing Before the Senate Comm. On Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions, 119 Cong. (2025), <https://www.help.senate.gov/hearings/restoring-trust-through-radical-transparency-reviewing-recent-events-at-the-centers-for-disease-control-and-prevention-and-implications-for-childrens-health>.

⁴ Todd Datz, *Slashing of funding for mRNA vaccine development raises concerns*, HARVARD T.H. CHAN SCHOOL OF PUBLIC HEALTH (Sept. 25, 2025) <https://hsph.harvard.edu/news/slashing-of-funding-for-mrna-vaccine-development-raises-concern/>.

and recommending vaccines to the public despite a commitment he made to you that ACIP would be “maintained without changes.”⁵

As a result of this unacceptable action, ACIP voted 8-3 to end a decades-long recommendation that all newborns be immunized at birth against hepatitis B despite decades of scientific data finding not only that it is safe and effective, but that it has successfully reduced the number of babies and young children infected by this virus from 20,000 a year to fewer than 20.⁶

Mr. Chairman: Holding an oversight hearing on Secretary Kennedy’s ill-conceived actions is more important now than ever.

Under Secretary Kennedy’s leadership, over 1,700 people have been infected with measles.⁷ Whooping cough cases are surging nationwide, and concerns about a severe flu season continue to grow.⁸ Vaccination rates across the country are falling.⁹ Children are dying from illnesses that vaccines could have prevented.¹⁰

Secretary Kennedy’s response to these crises has been to spread misinformation, end campaigns encouraging flu vaccinations, fire officials who disagree with him, and place individuals with significant conflicts of interest in positions of power—completely undermining Americans’ faith in our nation’s public health institutions.

Importantly, these are not just our concerns.

The American College of Physicians, representing 162,000 internal medicine physicians, called for Secretary Kennedy’s removal, stating that his actions were “sowing chaos and confusion and putting lives at risk.”¹¹

Dozens of scientific and medical groups, including the Academic Pediatric Association, the Infectious Diseases Society of America, and the American Public Health Association, have

⁵ Mike Wendling and Madeline Halpert, *RFK Jr. sacks entire US vaccine committee*, BBC (June 10, 2025), <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/clyge27y2g9o>.

⁶ Joseph Choi, *Cassidy urges CDC director to reject vaccine panel’s hepatitis B recommendations*, THE HILL (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://thehill.com/policy/healthcare/5635531-cassidy-cdc-hepatitis-b-vaccine-acip-hhs-rfk-jr/>

⁷ *Measles Cases and Outbreaks*, CENTER FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (Dec. 3, 2025), <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research/index.html>.

⁸ Lauren Young, *Is the U.S. in Store for Another Brutal Flu Season?* SCIENTIFIC AMERICAN (Nov. 24, 2025), <https://www.scientificamerican.com/article/how-bad-will-flu-season-be-this-year/>; Dr. Celine Gounder, *Whooping cough outbreaks surge, fueled by waning immunity and falling vaccination rates*, CBS NEWS (Nov. 19, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/whooping-cough-pertussis-cases-vaccination-rates/>.

⁹ *Vaccination Coverage and Exemptions among Kindergartners*, CENTERS FOR DISEASE CONTROL AND PREVENTION (July 31, 2025), https://www.cdc.gov/schoolvaxview/data/index.html#cdc_data_surveillance_section_2-new-findings-on-vaccination-coverage-and-exemptions-among-kindergartners-2024-2025-school-year.

¹⁰ Stephen Simpson, *The number of whooping cough cases in Texas is the highest its been in 11 years*, THE TEXAS TRIBUNE (Nov. 11, 2025), <https://www.texastribune.org/2025/11/11/texas-pertussis-whooping-cough-disease-infectious/>; *Texas announces second death in measles outbreak*, TX Dep’t of State Health Services (Apr. 6, 2025), <https://www.dshs.texas.gov/news-alerts/texas-announces-second-death-measles-outbreak>.

¹¹ *American College of Physicians Calls for Removal of Secretary Kennedy at HHS*, AMERICAN COLLEGE OF PHYSICIANS (Sept. 10, 2025), <https://www.acponline.org/acp-newsroom/american-college-of-physicians-calls-for-removal-of-secretary-kennedy-at-hhs>

called for Secretary Kennedy's resignation, highlighting their concern "that American people will needlessly suffer and die as a result of policies that turn away from sound interventions."¹²

More than 1,000 current and former staff at HHS called on Secretary Kennedy to resign, stating that he "continues to endanger the nation's health."¹³

In September, nine former CDC directors appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents, called Secretary Kennedy's actions to severely weaken our nation's public health programs "unacceptable" which "should alarm every American, regardless of political leanings."¹⁴

In October, six former surgeons general appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents, wrote that they "were compelled" to "speak with one voice" in the *Washington Post* that Secretary Kennedy's actions "are endangering the health of the nation," stating that "the profound, immediate and unprecedented threat that Kennedy's policies and positions pose to the nation's health cannot be ignored."¹⁵

This month, a dozen former Food and Drug Administration (FDA) commissioners appointed by both Democratic and Republican presidents wrote in the *New England Journal of Medicine* that that they were "deeply concerned by sweeping new FDA assertions about vaccine safety and proposals that would undermine a regulatory model designed to ensure that vaccines are safe, effective and available when the public needs them most."¹⁶

Mr. Chairman: You were right when you recently stated that "ACIP is totally discredited. They are not protecting children."¹⁷

You were also correct when you wrote last month: "What parents need to hear right now is vaccines for measles, polio, hepatitis B and other childhood diseases are safe and effective and will not cause autism. Any statement to the contrary is wrong, irresponsible, and actively makes Americans sicker."¹⁸

¹² Joint statement calling for Secretary Kennedy resignation, INFECTIOUS DISEASE SOCIETY OF AMERICA (Sept. 19, 2025), <https://www.idsociety.org/news--publications-new/articles/2025/joint-statement-calling-for-secretary-kennedy-resignation/>.

¹³ Letter to Sec. Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. and Members of the 119th Congress (Sep. 3, 2025) <https://static1.squarespace.com/static/689f5612fc63c95dc6488b44/t/68b7d4551870833ff6a5197e/1756877909805/HHS+United+Resignation+Letter.pdf>.

¹⁴ Richard Besser, et al., *We Ran the C.D.C.: Kennedy Is Endangering Every American's Health*, N.Y. TIMES (Sept. 1, 2025), <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/09/01/opinion/cdc-leaders-kennedy.html>.

¹⁵ Jerome Adams, et al., *Six surgeons general: It's our duty to warn the nation about RFK Jr.*, THE WASHINGTON POST (Oct. 7, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/2025/10/07/surgeons-general-rfk-jr-robert-kennedy/>.

¹⁶ Robert M. Califf, et al., *A Threat to Evidence-Based Vaccine Policy and Public Health Security at the FDA*, NEW ENG. J. MED. (Dec. 3, 2025), <https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2517497>.

¹⁷ Bill Cassidy [@SenBillCassidy], X (Dec. 4, 2025 at 7:55 AM), <https://x.com/SenBillCassidy/status/1996564037497491520>,

¹⁸ Bill Cassidy [@SenBillCassidy], X (Nov. 20, 2025 at 3:06 PM), <https://x.com/SenBillCassidy/status/1991599014270365829>.

Unfortunately, Secretary Kennedy is not communicating that important message to the American people. He is doing the exact opposite, and he is endangering the lives of our children and grandchildren in the process.

Failure to conduct an oversight hearing on Secretary Kennedy's actions would be an abdication of our responsibility—both from a moral perspective and as a matter of sound public health policy.

In February, you gave a speech on the Senate floor stating that you secured a commitment from Secretary Kennedy that “he will come before the HELP Committee on a quarterly basis, if requested.”¹⁹

It has been seven months since Secretary Kennedy last testified in front of our Committee. Since Secretary Kennedy was confirmed by the Senate in February, he has come before our Committee just once. In our view, that is unacceptable.

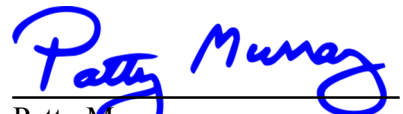
The time has come for the HELP Committee to hold Secretary Kennedy accountable for his actions. It is imperative that Secretary Kennedy come before our Committee to testify as soon as possible.

We look forward to working with you to make that happen.


Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Health, Education, Labor,
and Pensions



Patty Murray
United States Senator

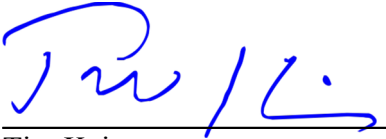


Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator

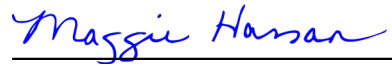


Christopher S. Murphy
United States Senator

¹⁹ Press Release, Sen. Bill Cassidy, Cassidy Delivers Floor Speech in Support of RFK, Jr. to be HHS Secretary (Feb. 4, 2025), <https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cassidy-delivers-floor-speech-in-support-of-rfk-jr-to-be-hhs-secretary/>.



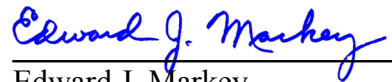
Tim Kaine
United States Senator



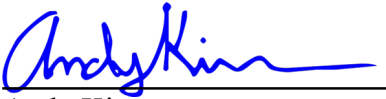
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



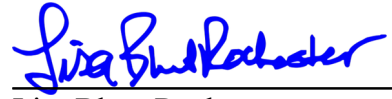
John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Andy Kim
United States Senator



Lisa Blunt Rochester
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
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