

RAND PAUL, OF KENTUCKY
SUSAN M. COLLINS, OF MAINE
LISA MURKOWSKI, OF ALASKA
MARKWAYNE MULLIN, OF OKLAHOMA
ROGER MARSHALL, OF KANSAS
TIM SCOTT, OF SOUTH CAROLINA
JOSH HAWLEY, OF MISSOURI
TOMMY TUBERVILLE, OF ALABAMA
JIM BANKS, OF INDIANA
JON HUSTED, OF OHIO
ASHLEY MOODY, OF FLORIDA

BERNARD SANDERS, OF VERMONT
PATTY MURRAY, OF WASHINGTON
TAMMY BALDWIN, OF WISCONSIN
CHRISTOPHER MURPHY, OF CONNECTICUT
TIM KAINE, OF VIRGINIA
MARGARET WOOD HASSAN, OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
JOHN W. HICKENLOOPER, OF COLORADO
EDWARD J. MARKEY, OF MASSACHUSETTS
ANDY KIM, OF NEW JERSEY
LISA BLUNT ROCHESTER, OF DELAWARE
ANGELA D. ALSOBROOKS, OF MARYLAND

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON HEALTH, EDUCATION,
LABOR, AND PENSIONS

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6300

MATT GALLIVAN, MAJORITY STAFF DIRECTOR
WARREN GUNNELS, MINORITY STAFF DIRECTOR

www.help.senate.gov

March 17, 2026

Dear Chairman Cassidy:

As you know, the scientific and medical community has been clear and unambiguous: Vaccines do not cause autism.

Since 1998, more than 40 rigorous scientific studies in seven countries involving over 5.6 million children have found no link between vaccines and autism. Major medical organizations have reached the same conclusion.

The American Academy of Pediatrics, the largest professional association of pediatricians in the United States representing over 65,000 physicians who treat kids every day, states: "There's no link between vaccines and autism. Anyone repeating this harmful myth is misinformed or intentionally trying to mislead parents."

The American Medical Association, the largest professional association of physicians in our country representing over 270,000 doctors, has likewise concluded that: "an abundance of evidence from decades of scientific studies shows no link between vaccines and autism."

You have correctly said: "I'm a doctor who has seen people die from vaccine-preventable diseases. 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."

I could not agree more with that assessment. Unfortunately, Health and Human Services Secretary Kennedy and many others inside the Trump Administration do not.

The reality is that since Secretary Kennedy has been in office, he has continued his longstanding crusade against vaccines and his advocacy of conspiracy theories that vaccines cause autism – all of which have been repeatedly rejected by scientists.

In June, Secretary Kennedy replaced the scientific experts on the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices with vaccine-skeptics, including several who have promoted the debunked claim that vaccines cause autism.

In September, the Trump Administration asserted that acetaminophen use during pregnancy causes autism – a conclusion you and the scientific community correctly challenged based on the evidence.

In November, Secretary Kennedy directed the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to publish false information on its website suggesting vaccines cause autism.

Later in 2025, the Food and Drug Administration removed a webpage that had previously warned consumers about unproven, and often dangerous, autism treatments.

And in January, Secretary Kennedy overhauled the National Institutes of Health (NIH)'s Interagency Autism Coordinating Committee (IACC), appointing 21 new non-federal members. Several of these appointees have publicly advanced false claims linking vaccines and autism.

The IACC is charged with disseminating fact-based information to the public about autism and developing recommendations for autism research. Unfortunately, Secretary Kennedy's newly appointed members have a history of doing the opposite by promoting and providing controversial, untested and dangerous treatments for autism and pushing discredited claims that vaccines cause autism. As a result, it has become abundantly clear that the American people can no longer trust information from the IACC about autism.

It is our responsibility to make sure that the American people understand the truth about vaccines and autism based on scientific evidence, not conspiracy theories.

Therefore, I would like to work with you to schedule a hearing on this issue as soon as possible.

Such a hearing would provide an opportunity for leading scientists, physicians, and public health experts to review the existing body of research on autism, discuss how federal agencies evaluate scientific evidence, and clarify what is known - and what is still being studied - about autism. Importantly, it would also allow the Committee to hear from members of the autism community about their priorities for federal research, services, and support.

I look forward to working with you to make this hearing possible.

Sincerely,



Bernard Sanders
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions