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Contact: [Taylor Harvey](#) (202) 224-4515

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Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Markup of Dr. Oz to be CMS Administrator *As Prepared for Delivery*

Later today, this Committee will vote on Dr. Oz's nomination. I'm going to spend a few minutes explaining why I cannot support his nomination.

During his confirmation hearing, Dr. Oz was given the chance to assure the American people that he would not be a rubber stamp for Republicans' plans to gut Medicaid and hike ACA premiums. At every turn, he failed the test. When I asked him a yes or no question about whether he would protect Medicaid, he dodged and weaved and refused to answer.

That's a stark contrast to what I heard at town halls across Oregon over the past week. In Oregon City, I was joined by Patty and Katina, a mother and daughter who count on Medicaid to help with Katina's medical expenses. Because of Medicaid, Katina thrives in her community as an Oregonian living with Down syndrome. There are countless other families in my state that are terrified of these cuts.

Dr. Oz also ducked on my other questions. When pressed on whether nurses belong in nursing homes, he replied that it was a "complicated question." Quite frankly, I find that answer offensive. It isn't complicated for the rest of us whether nursing homes ought to have adequate staff to take your mom to the bathroom or give your grandpa his meals. It's actually pretty simple.

Not only did the nominee dodge and weave during questioning at his confirmation hearing, he also failed to provide basic factual responses to my written questions submitted after his hearing. This lack of responsiveness to Congress should be unacceptable to every member of this Committee. But the Republican majority once again seems eager to disregard their own congressional oversight responsibility when Trump is calling the shots.

I'll also once again state that Dr. Oz is the second Trump nominee to come before the Finance Committee this year with a record of dodging Medicare and Social Security taxes. Nurses and firefighters pay these taxes out of every single hard-earned paycheck, but the multi-millionaire nominated to run Medicare can't be bothered to do the same.

I'm also deeply concerned about Dr Oz's history marketing Medicare Advantage plans. I'd like to ask for unanimous consent to enter into the record an investigation by my staff on the Finance Committee into the marketing middlemen that are exploiting Medicare Advantage rules to aggressively push private MA plans on seniors. This is a continuation of my efforts to spotlight health care middlemen that are leeching off the system at the expense of taxpayers and seniors.

My investigation found that too many for-profit insurance companies are spending billions of taxpayer dollars on marketing middlemen to drown seniors in calls and mailers. These tactics are designed to pressure them into enrolling in private health plans that might not even cover their preferred doctor or prescription, or that put up unexpected roadblocks to getting the care they need. Insurance companies and these marketing middlemen have orchestrated a complex and costly scheme to line the pockets of shareholders by raising costs for seniors and taxpayers and evading oversight and accountability.

Given Dr. Oz's history of basically acting as a salesman for Medicare Advantage, putting him in charge of regulating these middlemen would be like letting the fox guard the hen house. The bottom line is that Americans' tax dollars are, in too many instances, being used by for-profit insurance companies for shady marketing practices that take advantage of seniors. For-profit insurance companies spend five times more on marketing and administrative expenses than Traditional Medicare, which is run by the government.

If Elon Musk and his henchmen at DOGE actually cared about targeting waste and fraud, they would be focused on waste in Medicare Advantage rather than targeting Americans' hard-earned Social Security benefits.

I've successfully fought for more consumer protections against predatory MA marketing, and I asked Dr. Oz to pledge not to roll those protections back. He seemed open to my concerns. If he is confirmed, I'm going to hold him to that and watchdog this issue, spotlighting abuses when I see them.

I cannot support a nominee that's shown no ability to – or interest in – pushing back on Trump's dangerous health care agenda.

A web version of this statement is [here](#).

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