

The **UNITED STATES SENATE**
COMMITTEE *on* **FINANCE**

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Wyden Finance Committee Hearing Statement Slamming Trump and RFK Jr.'s Disastrous Health Care Agenda

As Prepared for Delivery

The Finance Committee is gathered this morning to discuss Donald Trump's health care blueprint for the coming year. Robert Kennedy came into the office of health secretary with sweeping promises of restoring the public's trust in government and making America healthy again.

As Trump campaign pollsters flail about trying to cover up Robert Kennedy's devastatingly unpopular anti-vaccine policies, today our witness is going to try to have it both ways. Mr. Kennedy will serve up enough fakery this morning to help Senate Republicans ignore the real harm he's causing, while still twisting the truth enough so he can go back to pushing anti-vax policies that are making kids sick as soon as he's out of the hearing room.

The rank hypocrisy at the heart of the Trump administration's health care agenda can be summed up in one sentence: goodies for those at the top while American families get sicker and poorer. While Trump and Kennedy are cozying up to insurance executives by handing over more than \$20 billion and throwing consumer protections in the trash can, Oregonians are playing Russian Roulette with their health care, going without insurance until they qualify for Medicare because they can't afford higher ACA premiums.

While Trump cuts sweetheart deals with Big Pharma execs, rural America is struggling to keep its hospitals open after Republicans made the largest cut to health care in history. What these communities are seeing now is only going to get worse, when the cuts Republicans have hidden until after the election rear their head. Time and again, when Republicans are put in charge of America's health care, there is a never ending flood of benefits for special interests while American families get left further behind. Nothing illustrates the Trump-Kennedy hypocrisy on health care affordability more than their approach to prescription drugs. Donald Trump spent the last year hosting executives from the largest pharmaceutical companies in the Oval Office. He boasted of so-called deals to bring down the price of their drugs. The details of those deals are totally secret.

My staff spoke with each company involved in these deals, and the only thing that's clear is the list of goodies these companies received in exchange. But Robert Kennedy is here this morning, asking Congress to codify these sweetheart deals sight unseen. The Trump-Kennedy agenda on drug pricing

amounts to “just trust Big Pharma.” That’s why every Democrat on this committee introduced legislation this week to make the terms of the deals public. While the American people wait for their costs at the pharmacy to go down, the administration is touting TrumpRx, which actually offers higher prices for drugs than what most people can get through their insurance. There is no bigger fraud on the planet when it comes to drug costs than Donald J. Trump.

Meanwhile, Robert Kennedy has presided over the largest cut to Americans’ health care in history, a choice that has already kicked Americans off their health care, forced hospitals to close, and caused health care workers to lose their jobs. Since Republicans passed that law, my staff have been thoroughly cataloging every hospital, clinic and health care provider that has shut their doors, reduced services, or laid off staff.

There have been over 170 closures and service reductions across 34 states. Nearly 7,500 health care workers have lost their jobs across 24 states. These health care providers cited the impossible financial challenges directly caused by Republican Medicaid cuts. I’d like to enter our latest report into the record.

I recently held a forum with health care leaders in a county in Oregon that Donald Trump carried with nearly 70 percent of the vote. What I heard there underscores the reports that are coming in from around the country: health care providers are walking an economic tightrope, and their communities can’t afford to lose the services they are providing. I’d like to enter into the record submissions from five states, including Oregon, as well as news articles from across the country, that confirm the catastrophe playing out on the ground as states contend with the impossible task of implementing more than \$1 trillion in cuts.

Robert Kennedy is the most senior and influential health care official in the country. When it comes to vaccines, Robert Kennedy has used his once-in-a-lifetime platform to make parents doubt themselves and doubt their doctors. Ninety percent of Americans infected with measles during this unprecedented outbreak, mostly children, have not been vaccinated.

It’s no coincidence that this comes as the person in charge of our country’s health care spouts lies and propaganda about vaccines, all on the taxpayer dime. Robert Kennedy ducks, bobs and weaves without taking responsibility or saying what needs to be said: vaccines save lives, and they keep kids from getting sick. He just won’t say it.

Robert Kennedy has repeatedly lied before Congress. First, he lied to me about his trip to Samoa. I’d like to enter into the record a report by the Guardian and The Associated Press, disclosing emails between State Department officials that make it clear that Kennedy was traveling to the island nation to promote his anti-vaccine views. Second, he lied to Congresswoman Terri Sewell by denying that he said Black children should be “re-parented” if they receive treatment for ADD and ADHD. And he has continued to lie about the Republican cuts to Medicaid, claiming there have been no cuts. That’s a ludicrous claim that would get him laughed out of any room where public officials and health care providers are making agonizing choices about payment cuts at this very moment.

These lies underscore why I asked Robert Kennedy to testify under oath last time he came before the committee. Regardless of whether or not he has taken the oath, he should remember that lying to Congress is a crime. One that won’t go without consequences.

Our witness is going to tell the committee this morning that Democrats are interested in protecting the status quo. Nothing could be further from the truth. The nation's health care system is broken. That's only going to get worse with the Republican cuts that you were cheerleading from the sidelines.

I am leading an effort with Democratic senators, many of them on this committee, to reimagine health care for American families so it is more affordable, more simple, and less beholden to the corporate interests that Republicans have empowered at every opportunity. If Robert Kennedy was serious about making America healthier again, he'd be working with us on taking on industries like Big Insurance and Big Pharma, rather than giving them sweetheart deals and deregulation that will hurt American families.

Today is going to be an important accounting on the state of America's health care.

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

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