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Contact: Taylor Harvey (202) 224-4515

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## **Wyden Opposes HHS Nominees O'Neill and Andres to be Deputy Secretary and Congressional Liaison** *As Prepared for Delivery*

Let's start with the elephant in the room: Trump's so-called 'big, beautiful bill.' This week, Republicans in the House unveiled the largest proposed cut to Medicaid in history.

The bill takes a wrecking ball to Medicaid, making it harder to get health care and loading down the program with red tape requirements. This approach is straight out of the playbook of for-profit insurance companies that Americans are completely fed up with. Taken together, the bill amounts to \$1 trillion in health care cuts, most of which comes from millions of working Americans and even children losing their health insurance. It will also raise premiums for over a million seniors on Medicare. Republicans say that they are cutting waste, fraud, and abuse out of our health care system. But that's just code for kicking millions of people off their health insurance. This bill is another excuse to give tax breaks to corporations and the ultra-wealthy.

I asked Mr. O'Neill to give a straightforward yes or no answer on whether he supports cutting Medicaid during his Finance Committee confirmation hearing. All he did was repeat the same tired talking points about how only certain groups deserve health care.

Here are the facts. These cuts to Medicaid are going to hurt kids, seniors, Americans with disabilities and working families the hardest. Parents are going to get caught up in a web of red tape requirements, and their children are going to pay the price.

Kids with disabilities are going to see their home care options reduced or cut altogether, forcing their parents to make agonizing choices about whether they can continue to live at home and get the care they need.

Nursing homes are going to be less safe because Republicans are rolling back the requirement that a nurse is always in a nursing home, 24/7.

And rural communities will be devastated. Rural hospitals are going to have to make tough choices between hiring another nurse or buying that medical device that isn't available anywhere in the

county. Everyday Americans will pay the price for Trump's bogus agenda of cutting vital programs instead of taking on waste, fraud, and abuse.

Mr. O'Neill endorsed that agenda. He also endorsed Robert Kennedy's disastrous approach to the ongoing measles outbreak, which has topped 1,000.

Worse yet, he appeared to share Robert Kennedy's appalling views about the life prospects of Americans with autism. I want to particularly condemn the notion of creating a national registry for those with autism. That's a dangerous road to travel down, and parents are scared about what the Trump administration is planning.

Turning now to Mr. Gary Andres who is nominated to serve as the congressional liaison at HHS.

Since Donald Trump was inaugurated, his administration has not provided a single meaningful response to dozens of inquiries. Robert Kennedy promised 'radical transparency,' but all the American people have gotten is radical secrecy.

In Mr. Andres' current position in the House Budget Committee, he signed off on a Republican wish list of more than \$2 trillion in Medicaid cuts. Many of those cuts made it into the bill that's moving through the House now. These cuts will force rural hospitals, nursing homes, and other essential services to close their doors or turn away patients, leaving millions of people without the health care they need. Americans will die as a result of these cuts.

I can't support nominees who are going to force American families to walk even more of an economic tightrope without the protection of affordable health care. I will be voting No.

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