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Wyden Opposes HHS and Treasury Nominees

As Prepared for Delivery

Before we begin, I'd like to give a special thanks to Mr. Bob Becker, and his excellent work with the Senate Recording Studio for 34 years. I've been told this is his last Senate hearing. So Bob, thank you for your important service keeping the trains rolling, and we wish you all the best in retirement.

Now on to the nominees, which the Committee will vote on later today.

First up is Dr. Adams, who is nominated to serve as Assistant Secretary for Family Support at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Dr. Adams talks a big game about safety and helping families, but a look at his record in Idaho shows otherwise.

He weakened oversight standards for Residential Treatment Facilities, where my own staff have found kids to be at high risk of abuse and neglect.

He single-handedly defunded programs in Idaho that supported kids with disabilities and their families.

He oversaw the rollback of staffing standards for child care facilities in Idaho.

Simply put: He hurt kids and families.

Worse still, he appears to be just another yes-man to help greenlight Donald Trump's dangerous and destructive agenda.

During his confirmation hearing, he dodged and weaved every question posed by myself and my Democratic colleagues about how this administration is undermining the health of kids and families.

Dr. Adams repeatedly stated that his job is to follow the law. But when asked directly by Committee members for a commitment to make sure congressionally-appropriated funding for critical programs like Head Start gets out the door – as required by law – he refused to answer.

He praised Secretary Kennedy for his efforts to weaken vaccine safety and his mishandling of the ongoing measles outbreak.

If confirmed, I'm going to hold Dr. Adams to his commitment to work with me to address the abuse and neglect of children, particularly at Residential Treatment Facilities. To that end, today, I'm making public our latest findings of that investigation, particularly as it relates to the mistreatment of LGBTQ youth at these facilities.

I'll turn now to Jonathan McKernan's nomination to serve as Undersecretary of Domestic Finance at the Treasury Department.

Earlier this year, Treasury handed DOGE the keys to the kingdom for the Treasury's payment system. When I pressed him about this takeover of the Treasury payment system, and its implications for taxpayer privacy, Mr. McKernan said, in short, there's nothing to see here.

If confirmed, Mr. McKernan would play a key role in how the Treasury Department handles the most sensitive data of American taxpayers found in that payment system.

The American people deserve to know what DOGE is doing with their personal information, and what's being done by the Trump administration to protect that data. Instead, Congress and the public are being met with more stonewalling.

Mr. McKernan has failed to demonstrate that he will be committed to protecting American taxpayers from the ongoing campaign of destruction at the Treasury Department.

With that, I urge my colleagues to vote no on both of these nominees.

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