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Wyden Hearing Statement on Robert Kennedy Creating a Health Care Calamity *As Prepared for Delivery*

As the Committee gathers today, the United States is in the midst of a health care calamity. The largest cuts to health care in the history of the nation are approaching like an avalanche. Last week, most of the senior leadership at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention were fired or resigned after refusing to bow to Robert Kennedy's unceasing crusade against vaccines.

I traveled across Oregon last month, and the message was the same from one end of the state to the other: Families are confused and scared about who to trust about their health care. Robert Kennedy and Donald Trump are to blame for this.

This morning my staff, in partnership with Senator Alsobrooks' team, is releasing a report that shows the disaster of Robert Kennedy's 203 days in office. Every single day, there's been an action that endangers the health and wellness of families. Robert Kennedy has elevated conspiracy theorists, crackpots and grifters to make life or death decisions about Americans' health care.

Robert Kennedy's tenure so far is marked by three calling cards:

1. Chaos at federal health agencies leaving families, doctors and the entire nation confused and frightened;
2. Corruption that benefits Robert Kennedy, Trump, and their friends at the expense of taxpayers; and
3. Higher health costs for families.

I ask unanimous consent to enter this report into the record.

It's been obvious from the start that Robert Kennedy only wanted this job to take vaccines away from Americans. During his confirmation process, he claimed to be pro-safety and pro-science, but his actions reveal a steadfast commitment to elevating junk science and fringe conspiracies.

Robert Kennedy's agenda has not been about choice and information for families. Just last week, he threatened doctors that deviated from the new anti-science vaccine guidelines he released that make it harder for pregnant women and children to get the COVID vaccine.

Robert Kennedy's bizarre statements and actions beg the question: why? Democrats on this committee answered that question months ago. Robert Kennedy is doing this to enrich himself and his allies. His family still stands to gain from class action lawsuits against vaccine makers.

Robert Kennedy fired every member of the group responsible for making vaccine recommendations to doctors across the country, under the false pretense of conflicts of interest. Meanwhile, many of the new members of the panel are outright vaccine deniers who have appeared as paid witnesses in lawsuits against vaccine makers. Their conflicts of interest and ethics disclosures remain hidden under lock and key at HHS.

On top of all of this bedlam, just two months ago Donald Trump signed into law the largest health care cuts in American history to pay for tax cuts for the wealthiest people and massive corporations.

Republicans know these cuts are going to hit communities like a wrecking ball. That's why they pushed the most severe cuts until after the election. That's why their members already introduced bills to roll back some of the cuts.

Make no mistake, these cuts are being felt right now. Last week, Idaho announced it was cutting payments to hospitals and nursing homes by 4 percent. Providence Seaside Hospital in Oregon just announced they are shutting down their labor and delivery unit, meaning expecting families will have to travel farther distances to give birth.

Every family is going to feel the burden of Trumpcare. Premiums are going to spike next year, especially for those who buy health insurance on their own, but the effects will also be felt by those who get insurance through an employer.

Congress has an opportunity to extend the Affordable Care Act tax credits that lower the cost of health insurance premiums. Democrats are ready to pass an extension that stops a dramatic premium spike that would force many families to pay double what they are now.

Instead of finding ways to help American families pay less for health care, Robert Kennedy is singularly focused on his anti-vaccine mission, fueled by a messiah complex, the consequences be damned.

Amid this litany of corruption and chaos, the one point I must underline is this: Robert Kennedy puts children in harm's way every single day. To my Republican colleagues, I must ask: what line must Robert Kennedy cross before you too sound the alarm?

This weekend, under the cover of darkness, Robert Kennedy attempted to disappear hundreds of children under his care at the Office of Refugee Resettlement facilities. These children, here without parents or family, were rounded up in the middle of the night and put on planes to Guatemala. Lawyers on the ground described unthinkable scenes. One child said to their lawyer, "Why do they want to send me back? My mom is dead and my dad abuses me. Why do they want to hurt me?"

These actions were illegal, and documents show that many of these children were in the country to escape trafficking in their home country.

Kennedy calls himself a “protector of children.” It’s a rich claim coming from someone who has flown on Jeffrey Epstein’s private jet on multiple occasions.

Robert Kennedy shouldn’t be within a million miles of this job. Republicans on this committee had a chance to prevent the public health train wreck that Kennedy is responsible for; every one voted to confirm him.

It is in the country’s best interest that Robert Kennedy step down, and if he doesn’t, Trump should fire him before more people are hurt by his reckless disregard for science and the truth.

I hope at the very least, Robert Kennedy has the decency to tell the truth today.

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

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