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Contact: Taylor Harvey (202) 224-7909

Wyden Opposes Trump HHS and Tax Nominees

As Prepared for Delivery

Washington, D.C. – Today the Finance Committee will vote on four Trump nominees who will operate at the heart of America’s health care and tax policy. Unfortunately these nominees have displayed the same pattern of obstruction and misrepresentation that has been the calling card of this administration.

Chris Klomp has been nominated to be the number two official at HHS under Robert Kennedy. Last week, I asked him to follow through on the commitment Robert Kennedy made to multiple Democrats and Republicans on this Committee five months ago to release the details of Trump’s sweetheart drug deals with Big Pharma. All I have received are excuses and misrepresentations.

I laid out in writing every request I have made to provide the facts to the American public. Until these details are made public, I will do everything in my power to impede Mr. Klomp’s nomination from moving forward.

Late last week, parts of the agreement were made public through a Freedom of Information Act request, confirming what my investigators previously found: these agreements are chock full of goodies for Big Pharma like fast track approval for new drugs and tariff exemptions. What is still missing from these disclosures: any evidence that patients and taxpayers are getting lower prices from Big Pharma.

Financial analysts have concluded these deals are “immaterial” to Big Pharmas’ stock prices, which leads to one conclusion: these deals are a fraud, and Donald Trump and his accomplices are fleecing the American people while corporate CEOs laugh all the way to the bank.

During his confirmation hearing, Mr. Klomp also tried to create the impression that he will be the “adult in the room” on vaccines. Yet, as we sit here today, the vaccine chaos that we’ve come to expect from Robert Kennedy’s HHS continues.

Until yesterday, the CDC was refusing to provide access to COVID vaccines under the Vaccines for Children program, a vital program that protects millions of low-income children across the country. As a result, medically frail children have not been able to access vaccination, and parents have been denied the ability to make health care choices that work for their families.

During his confirmation process, Robert Kennedy told the Finance Committee *no fewer than 37 times* that he would, and I quote, “do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines.” That was a lie that my Republican colleagues swallowed when they voted to confirm him.

Mr. Klomp is complicit in these lies, despite trying to convince the Senate that he’ll do things differently. My staff asked Mr. Klomp to confirm that CDC Director Schwartz will resolve this issue by the end of the week. I am glad to hear these vaccines are being distributed, but it shouldn’t take a member of Congress or their staff intervening to get these vaccines to the people who need them. As the country enters the fall season, I’ll be watching closely for more games that delay or deny vaccines to those who need them.

One last note on Mr. Klomp. At the hearing, my investigators revealed that he manipulated his tax payments to avoid paying any tax into Social Security or Medicare in at least two of the last several years. Late last week, a federal court ruled that this tax maneuver is illegal. If this ruling is upheld, I expect Mr. Klomp, as well as Secretary Bessent and CMS Administrator Oz to pay back the taxes they owe to the American people.

The other health care nominee the committee will vote on this morning, Ge Bai, has been working in the Trump administration while multiple reports containing false information were published. The nominee for this position is supposed to be the lead researcher for federal health care and human service programs, but the nominee has refused, in writing, to acknowledge or correct the falsehoods in the reports she oversaw.

This week, JD Vance, flanked by Oz and Klomp, used one of Bai’s faulty reports to justify colluding with insurance companies to kick 760,000 low- and middle-income Americans off their health insurance. In my view, that’s a big red flag that the nominee will prioritize the Trump administration’s political narrative over honestly examining the realities of what American families are experiencing with their health care.

The committee will also vote on the chief counsel for the IRS and a member of the Tax Court. These are positions of enormous import, but the Trump administration’s complete disregard for the law on tax matters relating to privacy and political inference is a grave concern.

The IRS Chief Counsel nominee also works for a law firm that represents Donald Trump’s private company. When my staff asked him whether he represented Trump’s company, he refused to answer. I asked him at the hearing and got the same non-answer. Then I met with him in my office, still no answer. That level of secrecy and obstruction, at a time when the IRS is trying to give the president a corrupt

immunity deal, is a whopping conflict of interest that should disqualify him from a position of such importance as IRS Chief Counsel.

Neither of these nominees have convinced me that they will follow the law ahead of orders handed down by Donald Trump, Scott Bessent or Frank Bisignano. Americans expect those who administer the tax code to be fair and impartial, and the current administration is utterly failing to meet those expectations.

For those reasons, I will vote no on each of these nominees.

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