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June 17, 2026

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20201

Secretary Kennedy,

We write regarding comments that you made during the April 22, 2026 Senate Finance Committee hearing about the decision-making process related to federal vaccine changes. In response to questioning from Senator Hassan, you stated that the White House Domestic Policy Council (DPC) and President Trump signed off on your decision to fire all 17 members of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). You also stated that the DPC approved of your decision to rewrite the committee's charter in order to allow for the appointment of unqualified individuals.

That was news. For nearly a year, you have publicly framed the ACIP purge as your own judgment call to restore "public trust."¹ Your testimony tells a different story, one in which the most consequential gutting of America's vaccine infrastructure in decades was greenlit by political appointees at the White House, with the President's blessing. This was not a routine personnel action. It was the deliberate dismantling of the nation's vaccine advisory body, replaced with your handpicked allies, several of whom have built careers, and earned profits, undermining the very vaccines they are now charged with evaluating.

Since the firings, the reconstituted committee has voted to roll back the long-standing recommendation that infants receive the hepatitis B vaccine within 24 hours of birth, and signaled that further changes to routine pediatric vaccines are forthcoming. Additionally, your actions have given a national platform to Aaron Siri, your long-term professional partner and anti-vaccine litigator, to attack the childhood schedule.² As a result, the American Academy of

¹ Press Release, U.S. Dep't of Health & Hum. Servs., *HHS Takes Bold Step to Restore Public Trust in Vaccines by Reconstituting ACIP* (June 9, 2025), <https://www.hhs.gov/press-room/hhs-restore-public-trust-vaccines-acip.html>.

² Michael Nevradakis, Ph.D., *Vaccine Injury Lawyer Delivers Scathing Rebuke of Childhood Vaccine Schedule — Offit, Hotez Decline Invitation to Debate*, Children's Health Def. (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://childrenshealthdefense.org/defender/acip-aaron-siri-scathing-rebuke-childhood-vaccine-schedule-offit-hotez->

Pediatrics has broken with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and issued its own schedule.³ More than 20 medical societies have called for your resignation.⁴ A federal court has already found that members you appointed lacked the legally required expertise to serve on ACIP.⁵

What has unfolded since the firings is a pattern of capture and defiance that has accelerated with every challenge. In August 2025, you fired CDC Director Susan Monarez less than a month into her tenure.⁶ Under oath before the Senate HELP Committee, Dr. Monarez testified that you had directed her to commit, in advance, to approving all of the newly constituted ACIP's recommendations regardless of whether scientific evidence supports the recommendations and to fire the career officials responsible for vaccine policy.⁷ When she refused, you fired her. Three senior CDC scientists resigned in protest.⁸

Furthermore, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) official that was responsible for reviewing ACIP members' potential conflict-of-interests was dismissed, and the two-year vetting process that previously governed committee appointments was replaced by an opaque selection process reportedly shaped by Mr. Siri, an outside attorney whose firm received \$6 million in 2023 from the Informed Consent Action Network (ICAN), an anti-vaccine organization with active litigation against HHS.⁹ Mr. Siri reportedly worked with you to identify

decline-invitation-debate/; Laine Bergeson et al., *Relatively Calm Afternoon ACIP Session Still Cauldron of 'Misinformation, Disinformation, and Information Taken Out of Context,'* CIDRAP (Dec. 5, 2025), <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/childhood-vaccines/relatively-calm-afternoon-acip-session-still-cauldron-misinformation>; Christina Jewett, *Kennedy's Ties to Ally Leading Vaccine Lawsuits Raise Ethical Concerns*, N.Y. TIMES, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/03/health/kennedy-aaron-siri-vaccines-lawsuits.html> (updated Oct. 6, 2025); Apoorva Mandavilli, *H.H.S. Takes a First Step Toward Restoring Vaccine Advisory Committee*, N.Y. TIMES (April 3, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/03/health/kennedy-vaccine-advisers-acip.html>.

³ Steve Inskip, *American Academy of Pediatrics Breaks from CDC on Childhood Vaccine Recommendations*, NPR (Jan. 28, 2026), <https://www.npr.org/2026/01/28/nx-s1-5690087/american-academy-of-pediatrics-breaks-from-cdc-on-childhood-vaccine-recommendations>.

⁴ [Kanishka Singh](https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/medical-groups-call-us-health-secretary-kennedy-step-down-2025-09-04/), *Medical Groups Call on US Health Secretary Kennedy to Step Down*, Reuters (Sept. 4, 2025), <https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/medical-groups-call-us-health-secretary-kennedy-step-down-2025-09-04/>.

⁵ Press Release, Am. Pub. Health Ass'n, *Federal Judge Blocks Immunization Schedule Changes* (Mar. 16, 2026), <https://www.apha.org/news-and-media/news-releases/apha-news-releases/federal-judge-blocks-immunization-schedule-changes>.

⁶ Daniel Payne, *Inside the CDC director's ouster: Kennedy demanded acceptance of new vaccine policies; Susan Monarez refused*, STAT NEWS (Aug. 28, 2025), <https://www.statnews.com/2025/08/28/cdc-director-fired-behind-the-scenes-look/>.

⁷ Susan Monarez, Former Dir., Ctrs. for Disease Control & Prevention, Testimony Before the S. Comm. on Health, Educ., Labor & Pensions, "*Restoring Trust Through Radical Transparency: Reviewing Recent Events at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and Implications for Children's Health*" (Sept. 17, 2025), <https://www.help.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/e7a31f2a-d31c-42bb-1a95-38e6abef8195/Monarez%20Testimony.pdf>

⁸ George Chidi, *CDC officials who quit in protest lead call to 'get politics out of public health,'* THE GUARDIAN (Aug. 28, 2025), <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/aug/28/cdc-rally-staffers-protest>.

⁹ Alexander Tin, *CDC Purges Career Officials from Oversight of Vaccine Committee*, CBS NEWS (June 11, 2025), <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cdc-purges-career-officials-vaccine-recommendations-process/>; Letter from Sen. Ron Wyden, Ranking Member, S. Comm. on Fin., to Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Sec'y, U.S. Dep't of Health & Human Servs. 6 (June 25, 2025),

https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/wyden_letter_to_rfk_on_firing_acip_members.pdf; See Laine Bergeson et al., *supra* note 1 (citing KFF Health News reporting on ICAN payments to Siri's firm).

candidates for senior federal health appointments, petitioned you to rewrite the ACIP charter, and was then invited to deliver a presentation to ACIP attacking the childhood vaccine schedule - the very committee that he helped you hand-pick.¹⁰

Make no mistake: this is your anti-vaccine agenda. You have spent your career sowing doubt about vaccines, profiting from litigation against their manufacturers, and pledging to use the powers of HHS as Secretary to validate theories the scientific community has long since rejected. Your reconstruction of ACIP is the culmination of that project, and you have embedded personal allies into the operations of a federal advisory committee to deliver the policy outcomes you have spent decades pursuing.

In March 2026, a federal court found that the ACIP members that you appointed lacked the legally required expertise to serve on the committee, and froze the committee's recommendations.¹¹ Rather than comply with the ruling, you modified the ACIP charter in April 2026 in a manner that adopted the wishlist that Mr. Siri and ICAN submitted to you the prior month, broadening the "expertise" criteria to include non-medical fields, adding non-voting liaison seats for anti-vaccine organizations, eliminating the longstanding requirement of three public meetings per year, and adding new charter language directing the committee to identify "gaps in vaccine safety research."¹² You are "rebuilding" this federal advisory committee to the specifications of a private litigant adverse to the agency, after a federal court found your previous ACIP actions to be unlawful, and after you fired the Senate-confirmed CDC Director for refusing to rubber-stamp its decisions. These actions raise serious questions about compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

As a result of your actions, public trust in federal vaccine guidance has plummeted. Patients now face confusing and conflicting guidance about vaccine recommendations, which in turn is having a real impact on vaccination rates. Kindergarten measles, mumps, and rubella (MMR) coverage has fallen to 92.5%, well below the 95% threshold needed for community protection, leaving roughly 286,000 kindergartners unprotected.¹³ The United States has recorded more than 4,100 measles cases since January 2025, the worst year since measles elimination was declared in 2000, including the deaths of three unvaccinated children and one adult.¹⁴ Moreover, public health modeling estimates that even a one-percentage-point annual decline in MMR coverage produces more than 17,000 measles cases, 4,000 hospitalizations, and dozens of pediatric deaths

¹⁰ Christina Jewett, *Kennedy's Ties to Ally Leading Vaccine Lawsuits Raise Ethical Concerns*, N.Y. TIMES, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/10/03/health/kennedy-aaron-siri-vaccines-lawsuits.html> (updated Oct. 6, 2025); Apoorva Mandavilli, *H.H.S. Takes a First Step Toward Restoring Vaccine Advisory Committee*, N.Y. TIMES (April 3, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/03/health/kennedy-vaccine-advisers-acip.html>.

¹¹ Apoorva Mandavilli, *Judge Strikes Down Kennedy's Vaccine Policies*, N.Y. TIMES (March 16, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/03/16/health/childhood-vaccines-lawsuit-kennedy.html>.

¹² Apoorva Mandavilli, *With New Charter, Kennedy Redesigns Vaccine Committee and May Sidestep Court Ruling*, N.Y. TIMES (April 9, 2026), <https://www.nytimes.com/2026/04/09/health/cdc-rfk-jr-vaccine-committee-ruling.html>.

¹³ Ctrs. for Disease Control & Prevention, *Measles Cases and Outbreaks*, <https://www.cdc.gov/measles/data-research> (last visited May 20, 2026).

¹⁴ Pub. Health Commc'ns Collaborative, *Communicating About the Ongoing Measles Outbreak* (May 4, 2026), <https://publichealthcollaborative.org/communication-tools/communicating-about-the-2025-measles-outbreak/>.

over five years, at a cost of not only lives but nearly \$8 billion.¹⁵ You have undermined public confidence in vaccines that are proven to be safe and effective, and your actions are increasing the risk that more American children will suffer serious illness or die from vaccine-preventable diseases.

According to your testimony, you presented the White House with a calculated plan to dismantle the nation's vaccine advisory council, replacing its members with cynics who profit from sowing distrust in vaccines, and President Trump signed off. This from the very President who pledged to "drain the swamp" and remove undue influence of special interests in policymaking.

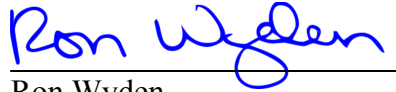
To assess the legality, decision-making process, and public health consequences of these actions, please produce the following no later than **July 17, 2026**:

1. All records and communications between HHS and DPC, the Office of the President, the Office of Management and Budget, or any other Executive Office of the President component regarding the decision to dismiss the 17 ACIP members and rewrite the ACIP charter and underlying regulations, including approvals, directives, draft decision memos, and any written authorization referenced in your April 22, 2026 testimony.
2. All records identifying which White House and HHS officials participated in or approved the firings and the selection of replacement members, including calendars, meeting invitations, call logs, and communications involving DPC staff, the HHS Office of the Secretary, and any Trump Administration nominees not yet confirmed at the time.
3. All analyses, memoranda, briefing materials, or risk assessments provided to the White House, the President, or senior HHS leadership regarding the potential public health consequences of dismissing ACIP members and rewriting its charter, including who prepared them, what information was considered, what alternatives were evaluated, and the timeline on which decisions were made. If no such analyses were prepared or provided, state so explicitly, along with the rationale.
4. All records related to the vetting of replacement ACIP appointees, including conflict-of-interest reviews, recommending individuals or organizations, and any role played by outside parties, including Mr. Siri, the Informed Consent Action Network, or any other person or entity outside HHS, in identifying, recommending, or vetting candidates. Please include records concerning the dismissal of the HHS official previously responsible for ACIP conflict-of-interest review.
5. All records relating to HHS's compliance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act in connection with the June 2025 dismissals, the selection of replacement members, and the renewal of the ACIP charter, including any legal analyses prepared or received concerning FACA's "fairly balanced" and conflict-of-interest requirements.

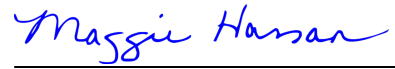
The American people deserve to know the reasons that the administration decided to gut ACIP and whether that decision was based on the political and personal agendas of a small group of vaccine cynics who you and President Trump sought to appease. We expect your full and timely cooperation.

¹⁵ Laine Bergeson, *2025 Measles Resurgence Carries Estimated \$244 Million Price Tag*, CIDRAP (Feb. 26, 2026), <https://www.cidrap.umn.edu/measles/2025-measles-resurgence-carries-estimated-244-million-price-tag>.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance



Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Senate
Finance Subcommittee on
Health Care