

United States Senate
COMMITTEE ON FINANCE
WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

August 28, 2025

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

Secretary Kennedy,

Over the course of your nomination process to become Secretary of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), you frequently touted your commitment to “radical transparency.” Yet, your short, chaotic tenure at HHS is mired in evasion, misinformation, and broken commitments. Next week, when you appear before the Senate Finance Committee (the Committee), I expect you to respond directly—and truthfully—to questions from Senate Democrats on the Committee.

Among the numerous responsibilities of the HHS Secretary, serving as a trusted, effective communicator is arguably the most fundamental. As the nation’s premier health leader, you are charged with communicating to the American people about everything from public health needs to complex scientific developments to health insurance rules. On all counts, you have failed to execute on this most basic obligation, all while irresponsibly upending the very functions and programs core to the HHS mission to enhance all Americans’ health and well-being. Your failure to carry out this rudimentary task risks the health and safety—indeed, the very lives—of millions of American families. Your irresponsible, rash stance towards vaccine safety serves as just one example. The United States is experiencing the worst measles outbreak in three decades, eclipsing 1,200 cases and costing three Americans, including two young children, their lives. Rather than offer a full-throated endorsement of the measles vaccine as this crisis worsened, you waffled, citing personal choice and touting alternative courses of treatment.

Beyond the broken promise of “radical transparency,” you reneged on your commitments around vaccine safety, putting all Americans at heightened health risk. Chief among these promises were those to “work within the current vaccine approval and safety monitoring systems and not establish parallel systems” and “maintain the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) without changes.”

Disregarding your own word, you unilaterally fired all 17 members of ACIP, canceled National Institutes of Health (NIH) studies on mRNA and vaccine hesitancy, closed centers dedicated to

preventing future pandemics, and added unnecessary barriers to COVID vaccine access, especially for pregnant women, children, and any adults who are seeking to protect themselves and their family from COVID infections. It is clear now that these so-called promises were empty rhetoric to secure the votes needed to be confirmed and lacked true intention to keep your word to members of Congress and the American people.

Your tenure as Secretary thus far has been the most opaque and secretive of any federal agency in living memory. This hearing represents an opportunity to correct course and deliver on the promise of “radical transparency” you made to this Committee. During your nomination hearing, you stated, “If members of this committee or other members of Congress want information, the doors are open.” To be clear: Senate Democrats on this Committee are standing at your door demanding answers on behalf of our constituents.

As you prepare for next week’s hearing, I remind you that the members of this Committee have sent numerous inquiries, including hundreds of questions, to HHS or HHS sub-agencies requesting vital information on behalf of the American public that still await response, in some cases sitting for hundreds of days. For the few letters that received a reply, the “response” was short, filled with boilerplate language, and lacking any substantive information.

Among the most pressing matters, the Committee still awaits responses on the following:

1. On January 31, 2025, Leader Schumer and Ranking Member Wyden [wrote to HHS](#) requesting answers on the breakdown of Medicaid payment portals.
2. On February 7, 2025, Ranking Members Wyden, Neal, and Pallone wrote to [HHS and the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services \(CMS\)](#) with detailed questions on reported access by the so-called Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE) to HHS and CMS payment and data systems.
3. On February 12, 2025, Senator Warren, with Senator Duckworth, [sent a letter](#) to Dr. Oz regarding his concerning views on women’s reproductive freedom. This letter requests a written response.
4. On February 20, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden [wrote to the Office of Refugee Resettlement](#) (ORR) with detailed questions related to information sharing between ORR and ICE that may compromise the care of children and deter timely family unification and sponsorship of unaccompanied children.
5. On February 21, 2025, [Senate Democrats wrote to HHS expressing alarm](#) at unilateral lay-offs of 5,000+ civil servants, including CMS employees.

6. On February 26, 2025, Ranking Members Wyden and Sanders [sent a letter](#) to HHS and the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) on reported firings involving the Organ Procurement and Transplantation Network (OPTN).
7. On March 3, 2025, Senator Warren [sent a letter](#) to HHS Secretary RFK Jr. on his dangerous policies aimed at undermining vaccines and vaccine production.
8. On March 5, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden and Senator King [sent a letter](#) with detailed requests on lay-offs at CMS.
9. On March 10, 2025, Senator Warren, with Ranking Member Wyden and Senator Sanders, [sent a letter](#) to HHS Secretary RFK Jr. regarding conflicts of interest arising out of the Secretary's dinners with healthcare and Big Pharma executives at Mar-a-Lago.
10. On March 12, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden and Aging Committee Ranking Member Gillibrand sent a [letter to HHS](#) asking how Medicaid cuts would impact older adults and how HHS would mitigate the effects of the bill for this population.
11. On March 14, 2025, Senator Warnock [sent a letter](#) to HHS about the indiscriminate firings of CDC employees.
12. On April 1, 2025, Senator Warner and Ranking Members Wyden and Sanders sent a [letter to HHS](#) from Senate Democrats on firings and forced retirements that gutted HHS by 20,000 employees.
13. On April 4, 2025, Senator Welch [wrote](#) to HHS regarding the agency's decision to close the Division of Energy Assistance and terminate its employees. The letter expressed particular concern with the administration of the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) and urged HHS to reinstate the Division of Energy Assistance employees immediately.
14. On April 10, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden and Senator Whitehouse [led a letter to HHS and Treasury](#) on DOGE access to the national child support database.
15. On April 15, 2025, Ranking Members Wyden and Sanders sent a [letter to HHS](#) on mass firings at the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) that risk kids' safety and well-being.
16. On April 16, 2025, Senators Blunt, Rochester, Gillibrand, Merkley, Lujan, Klobuchar, Sanders, Duckworth, Booker, Warren, Alsobrooks, and Wyden [sent a letter](#) to HHS on mass firings at HRSA.

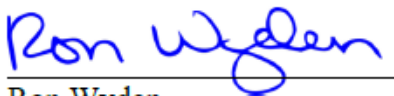
17. On April 22, 2025, Senator Hassan [sent a letter](#) to HHS expressing concern at the appointment of David Geier to a position at HHS. The letter calls upon the Secretary to terminate his employment.
18. On April 28, 2025, Senators Gillibrand, Sanders, Wyden, and Baldwin [led a letter](#) to HHS on the agency's proposal to eliminate the Administration for Community Living (ACL).
19. On May 7, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden led colleagues in [sending a letter to HHS](#) regarding reports about the elimination of the team responsible for tracking assisted reproductive technology success rates, including IVF.
20. On May 8, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden [sent a letter to HHS](#) on mass firings of HHS Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) response teams that pose serious transparency, accountability, and privacy concerns.
21. On May 8, 2025, Senators Warnock and Ossoff [sent a letter](#) to HHS asking for a meeting to discuss the firings at CDC.
22. On May 13, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden sent a follow-up letter to ORR regarding reports of information sharing with DHS after the agency's non-answer to his February letter. ORR did not respond to this follow-up for over three months, and the agency's response did not fully address Ranking Member Wyden's concerns.
23. On May 28, 2025, Senator Welch [wrote](#) again to HHS about LIHEAP, which President Trump proposed eliminating in his FY26 budget.
24. On June 12, 2025, Senators Warnock and Lujan [sent a letter](#) to HHS about the firings of ACIP members. The letter requests that he restore the fired members immediately.
25. On June 17, 2025, Senator Warren [sent a letter to HHS](#) with Senator Duckworth regarding the Trump Administration's decision to cut funding to the development of a bird flu vaccine.
26. On June 24, 2025, Senator Warren [sent a letter to HHS](#) regarding RFK's ACIP appointees' conflicts of interest.
27. On June 25, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden [sent a letter to HHS](#) regarding the firing of all 17 ACIP members and their replacement with unqualified skeptics who have serious conflicts of interest.

28. On July 18, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden and Ranking Member Warner [sent a letter](#) to HHS and CMS on the impacts of Trumpcare on the ability of small and rural hospitals to invest in cybersecurity improvements.
29. On July 25, 2025, Leader Schumer and Ranking Member Wyden led colleagues in [sending a letter](#) to CMS requesting detailed responses on how the agency plans to administer funding from the rural health transformation program included in the Republican reconciliation bill that will reportedly be distributed to states as soon as September.
30. On July 29, 2025, Senator Warren, along with Senators Markey, Merkley, and Whitehouse, [sent a letter to HHS](#), as well as other agencies, regarding Trump administration policy changes—including funding cuts to LIHEAP—that have increased energy costs for Americans.
31. On July 31, 2025, Ranking Member Wyden and Senator Cortez Masto [sent a letter](#) to Trump holding him and Republicans responsible for a \$5 billion Big Pharma bailout on the biggest blockbuster drugs. The letter calls on Republicans to repeal this bailout to Big Pharma and save cancer patients and taxpayers billions of dollars in drug costs.

Under oath, you committed to ushering in a new era of trust and openness between the American people and their health and human services agencies. Up to this point, you have failed to honor that commitment, and the result has been widespread confusion and misinformation across the nation. Under your leadership, transparency and communication from HHS has been selective at best and deceptive and deeply harmful at worst.

The Committee requests an explanation for this blatant lack of transparency, the delays of a hundred days or more, and a commitment to responses to the above letters by September 4th. I urge you to use the opportunity of the Committee hearing to make good, once and for all, on your promise of “radical transparency.”.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden

United States Senator

Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance