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United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-6200

GREGG RICHARD, STAFF DIRECTOR
JOSHUA SHEINKMAN, DEMOCRATIC STAFF DIRECTOR

October 9, 2025

Dear Chairman Crapo:

Secretary Kennedy has made numerous statements related to vaccines before the Senate Finance Committee that raise serious concerns about his truthfulness, integrity, and competence. Since becoming confirmed, Kennedy has eroded access to essential, life-saving vaccines without clinical or scientific justification. As such, we strongly urge the Committee to carry out a bipartisan investigation into Kennedy's actions and conflicts of interest. Given the severity of these matters and their bearing on the health and safety of children and families, this investigation should be prioritized by the Majority and begin without delay.

As you know, the Senate Finance Committee has jurisdiction over programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) and the statutory requirements related to vaccine coverage, cost-sharing, and access in these programs are, in part, tied to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Prior to Kennedy's takeover, ACIP had been considered the nation's premier advisory committee on vaccine recommendations. Changes to ACIP recommendations that are not clinically justified put vaccines out of reach for many, sow doubt in safe and effective products, and result in higher out-of-pocket costs for people receiving vaccine coverage through Medicare Part D, adults on Medicaid, and people covered by private health plans.¹ Kennedy's actions related to vaccines fall squarely within this jurisdiction, warranting appropriate, bipartisan Committee oversight that is now overdue.

Kennedy's actions stand in contrast to what he led bipartisan members of the Finance Committee to believe throughout his confirmation process. For example:

- Nine Finance Committee members asked Kennedy vaccine-related questions, and the word "vaccine" came up 243 times in his questions for the record.²

¹ Center for Value-Based Insurance Design, *Cost-Sharing for Immunizations in Medicare: Impacts on Beneficiaries and Recommendations for Policymakers*, University of Michigan (May 5, 2017) <https://vbidcenter.org/cost-sharing-for-immunizations-in-medicare-impacts-on-beneficiaries-and-recommendations-for-policymakers/>.

² U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services – Responses to Questions for the Record* (Jan. 31, 2025) https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/responses_to_questions_for_the_record_to_robert_f_kennedy_jrpart_1.pdf; U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services – Responses to Questions for the Record* (Jan. 31, 2025) https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/responses_to_questions_for_the_record_to_robert_f_kennedy_jrpart_2.pdf; U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of*

- In response to written questions during his confirmation process, Kennedy repeatedly assured Finance Committee members – no less than 37 times – that he would “do nothing as HHS Secretary that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines.”
- Senator Cassidy reported that, in order to secure his vote, Kennedy committed to “maintain[ing] the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices without changes.”³
- Ranking Member Wyden explicitly asked Kennedy whether he would replace current ACIP members or try to influence the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Director’s decisions related to ACIP recommendations.⁴

In June, Kennedy began to violate these commitments when he dismissed all 17 members of ACIP in June.⁵ In their places, he installed two rounds of individuals who are unqualified, have conflicts of interest, or are outright vaccine alarmists, and upended the group’s standard working process.⁶ More recently, Kennedy’s testimony to the Finance Committee on September 4, 2025 raised alarm about his actions related to vaccines and his integrity. Finance Committee members focused significantly on the events surrounding the firing of former CDC Director, Dr. Susan Monarez, at that hearing. Dr. Monarez alleges that Kennedy demanded she preapprove vaccine recommendations by the ACIP, regardless of whether there was scientific evidence supporting these recommendations. On multiple occasions, Kennedy told the Finance Committee that Dr. Monarez is lying about these events. On September 17, 2025, Dr. Monarez testified about these events before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions (HELP) Committee, where she stood by her claims. Additionally, reporting suggests that Kennedy excludes CDC career scientists from vaccine-related decisions and policymaking, and political appointees play a central role in all vaccine decision-making. The situation is urgent and alarming.

Recent actions by Kennedy reinforce the conflict of interest concerns raised by Finance Committee members during his confirmation process.⁷ For example, two of Kennedy’s hand-picked ACIP members were paid expert witnesses in Merck-related litigation, including one member who worked on litigation related to the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine

California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services – Responses to Questions for the Record (Jan. 31, 2025) https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/responses_to_questions_for_the_record_to_robert_f_kennedy_jrpart_3.pdf.

³ Senator Bill Cassidy, *Cassidy Delivers Floor Speech In Support of RFK, Jr. To Be HHS Secretary*, U.S. Senate (Feb. 4, 2025) <https://www.cassidy.senate.gov/newsroom/press-releases/cassidy-delivers-floor-speech-in-support-of-rfk-jr-to-be-hhs-secretary/>.

⁴ U.S. Senate Committee on Finance, *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services – Responses to Questions for the Record* (Jan. 31, 2025) https://www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/responses_to_questions_for_the_record_to_robert_f_kennedy_jrpart_2.pdf.

⁵ Mary Kekatos, *RFK Jr. cancels at least \$500M in mRNA vaccine funding. What are the implications?*, ABC News (Aug. 6, 2025) <https://abcnews.go.com/Health/rfk-jr-cancels-500m-mrna-vaccine-funding-implications/story?id=124406624>.

⁶ Mike Stobbe, *Kennedy’s new CDC panel includes members who have criticized vaccines and spread misinformation*, AP News (June 12, 2025) <https://apnews.com/article/cdc-acip-vaccine-committee-9f58e1f004075b081718ff078de88d76>.

⁷ Elizabeth Warren and Ron Wyden, *Letter to Robert F. Kennedy Jr.*, U.S. Senate (Feb. 2, 2025) https://www.warren.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/warren_wyden_letter_to_rfk_jr.pdf.

(Gardasil), which Kennedy himself was involved in.⁸ Then, later in public comments, Kennedy said he would be “revolutionizing the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program,” which could cause vaccine manufacturers to exit the market; such exits could severely curb vaccine access across the country. In support of this work, Kennedy awarded a \$150,000 contract to a law firm – which he later increased to \$250,000 – that advances his unscientific views about the safety of the Gardasil vaccine.⁹ ACIP members’ recent comments also surface a new ethics concern. At the June ACIP meeting, when an attendee asked why a memo outlining the scientific evidence showing the lack of safety risks associated with thimerosal was pulled down, Dr. Robert Malone, noted: “My understanding is that article was not authorized by the Office of the Secretary.”¹⁰ ACIP’s members are supposed to be independent, but this comment suggests that Kennedy – and other Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) employees – may be actively coordinating the panel’s work.

We are not alone in sounding the alarm regarding the unprecedented changes to ACIP and vaccine access. In July, the American Academy of Pediatrics, five medical organizations, and a pregnant physician plaintiff filed suit against HHS and Kennedy for acting arbitrarily and capriciously when Kennedy unilaterally changed the COVID-19 vaccine recommendation for children and pregnant people. Additionally, dozens of hospital and provider associations, advocacy organizations, watchdog groups, and companies released strong statements opposing Kennedy’s ACIP actions.¹¹ There has been a commensurate, on-the-ground outcry from

⁸ At the September Senate Finance Committee hearing Senator Cassidy stated: “What I am concerned about is that many of those whom you’ve nominated for ACIP have received revenue as serving as expert witnesses for plaintiffs’ attorneys suing vaccine makers.” Senator Cassidy was likely referring to Martin Kullendorff and Dr. Robert Malone, two of Secretary Kennedy’s newly installed ACIP members, who have served as paid expert witnesses in ongoing litigation against Merck, some of which Secretary Kennedy’s family is also involved in. *See* Christina Jewett and Sheryl Gay Stolberg, *Kennedy’s New Vaccine Advisers Helped Lawyers Raise Doubts About Their Safety*, The New York Times (June 13, 2025) <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/13/us/politics/rfk-jr-vaccine-advisers.html>.

⁹ Lauren Gardner, *Kennedy looks to overhaul vaccine court after years of criticism*, Politico PRO (July 7, 2025) <https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2025/07/kennedy-looks-to-overhaul-vaccine-court-after-years-of-criticism-00437470>; Margaret Manto, *HHS Award Indicates Changes May Be Coming for Vaccine Injury Compensation Program*, NOTUS (June 16, 2025) <https://www.notus.org/health-science/hhs-award-vaccine-injury-compensation-program>.

¹⁰ U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) – Day 2 of 2 (June 26, 2025) <https://www.youtube.com/live/z-16flmZoEc?si=6-T5sYn8dIJg1LYN&t=11379>; Will Stone and Pien Huang, *RFK Jr.’s vaccine advisers raise disproven fears about the preservative thimerosal*, NPR (June 26, 2025) <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/06/26/nx-s1-5438485/cdc-acip-rfk-thimerosal-vaccines>.

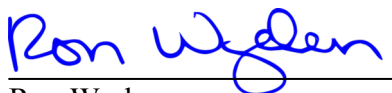
¹¹ [American Academy of Family Physicians](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [American Association of Immunologists](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [American Association of Nurse Practitioners](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) Statement on June 12, 2025; [American Academy of Physician Associates](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [American College of Emergency Physicians](#) Press Release on June 4, 2025; [American College of Osteopathic Pediatricians](#) Statement, June 2025; [American College of Physicians](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network](#) Press Release on June 11, 2025; American Immunization Registry Association Statement on June 10, 2025; [Alliance for Aging Research](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [American Medical Association](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [American Medical Association](#) Press Release on June 9, 2025; [American Public Health Association](#) Press Release on June 9, 2025; [American Pharmacists Association](#) Press Release on June 9, 2025; [American Society for Microbiology](#) Press Release on June 10, 2025; [American Society for Meningitis Prevention](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Biotechnology Innovation Organization](#) Press Release on June 9, 2025; [California Medical Association](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [California Immunization Coalition](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [Community Catalyst](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Doctors for America](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [FamiliesUSA](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [Global Healthy Living Foundation](#) Press Release on June 10, 2025;

physicians, parents, people with disabilities and seniors about the danger these actions pose to their ability to access vaccines for their patients, themselves, and their loved ones, especially young children. Finally, many senior scientists who have resigned from the CDC echo similar concern about the perversion of process and evidence at the agency under Kennedy's leadership.¹²

Secretary Kennedy's actions put the health and safety of the American people at risk, and Congress must get to the bottom of how he is making decisions related to vaccines and whether his testimony to our Committee aligns with the facts and evidence. Please join us in opening a bipartisan, fact-based investigation into Kennedy's wide-ranging anti-vaccine actions and conflicts of interest. The wellbeing of the American people depends on it.

Thank you for your prompt consideration of this important matter. We look forward to hearing back from you soon.

Sincerely,



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance



Peter Welch
United States Senator



Elizabeth Warren
United States Senator



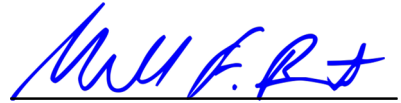
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator

[Infectious Diseases Society of America](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [Illinois Public Health Association](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Immunization Coalition of Delaware](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Massachusetts Medical Society](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Medical Society of the District of Columbia](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [National Association of Nutrition and Aging Services Programs](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [National Association of School Nurses](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [National Foundation for Infectious Diseases](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [National Medical Association](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Partnership to Fight Infectious Disease](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America Statement on June 9, 2025; [Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Public Citizen](#) Statement on June 9, 2025; [Society for Healthcare Epidemiology](#) Statement on June 10, 2025; [Vaccinate Your Family](#) Statement on June 9, 2025.

¹² Apoorva Mandavilli, *Why a Vaccine Expert Left the C.D.C.: 'Americans Are Going to Die'*, The New York Times (June 18, 2025) <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/06/18/health/havers-cdc-vaccines-kennedy.html>; Alexander Tin, *CDC official overseeing COVID-19 vaccine recommendations resigns*, CBS News (Updated June 4, 2025) <https://www.cbsnews.com/news/cdc-official-overseeing-covid-19-vaccine-recommendations-resigns/>.



Tina Smith
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator

Enclosure: *Setting the Record Straight: An Accounting of Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s September 4, 2025 Testimony on the CDC & Vaccines*

Enclosure: *Costs, Chaos, and Corruption: 203 Days of Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s Disastrous Leadership*