

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

January 24, 2025

Dear senators,

The undersigned 87 organizations representing diverse interests and sectors urge you to vote against Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.'s nomination to serve as the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services and to publicly announce your opposition as soon as possible if you have not yet already done so.

Kennedy regularly promotes conspiracy theories without evidentiary basis. We can expect that he would use his elevated platform in this role to spread his dangerous anti-science views. This could have a durable and consequential impact beyond any particular policy changes he advocates.

After all, he has already had a dangerous impact on public health even without serving in a government role. His misleading anti-vaccine positions have contributed to the dangerous rise of vaccine skepticism in the United States and around the world, with identifiably deadly results in some cases.<sup>1</sup> He has perpetuated skepticism of the established scientific fact that the HIV virus causes AIDS<sup>2</sup> and touted racist pseudoscience about vaccines<sup>3</sup> and COVID.<sup>4</sup> He has made baseless claims that environmental chemical exposure causes children to become gay or transgender.<sup>5</sup> There are simply too many examples to include in one letter.<sup>6</sup> The bottom line is that such anti-science views are disqualifying for someone tasked with serving as the top public health official in the nation.

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<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-trump-vaccines/robert-kennedy-jr-says-tapped-by-trump-to-head-vaccine-safety-review-idUKKBN14U2HK/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://nymag.com/intelligencer/article/robert-f-kennedy-jr-2024-presidential-campaign-democratic-primary.html>;  
<https://www.advocate.com/politics/robert-f-kennedy-jr-poppers>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vHkXhHQUTDo>

<sup>4</sup> <https://nypost.com/2023/07/15/rfk-jr-says-covid-was-ethnically-targeted-to-spare-jews/>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.cnn.com/2023/07/13/politics/robert-kennedy-jr-chemicals-water-children-frogs/index.html>;  
<https://www.politifact.com/factchecks/2023/jun/28/robert-f-kennedy-jr/no-evidence-atrazine-in-the-water-supply-is-causing/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.nytimes.com/article/rfk-conspiracy-theories-fact-check.html>;  
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2024/11/15/rfk-jr-views-conspiracies-false-claims/>;

Kennedy has also made clear he would dismantle the very public health institutions he would be charged with leading. He has publicly stated he would stop research on drug development<sup>7</sup> and infectious disease,<sup>8</sup> giving them “a break for about eight years.” He has also pledged to fire hundreds of National Institute of Health (NIH) employees,<sup>9</sup> told Food and Drug Administration (FDA) workers to “pack [their] bags,”<sup>10</sup> and said he’d like to clear out entire departments of the federal government, including the nutrition department at the FDA.<sup>11</sup>

It is through this prism of bizarre anti-public health views that senators must view anything that Kennedy says. For example, Kennedy’s criticisms of Big Pharma rightfully strike a nerve with the American public (and echo critiques that many of us have long made). But instead of strengthening scientific standards at the FDA, we have every reason to believe that Kennedy’s approach would instead rely on lowering standards and disregarding science in order to tout and perhaps approve unproven medications and treatments.

Successful health initiatives rely on public confidence. If Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. takes command of the Department of Health and Human Services, we will face lies and disinformation at an unprecedented scale that are capable of unwinding a century of progress on fighting disease and promoting public health.

We urge you to swiftly announce your opposition to Kennedy’s nomination as HHS chief.

Signed,

## **National Organizations**

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<sup>7</sup> <https://x.com/JacobRubashkin/status/1803974935091761518>

<sup>8</sup>

<https://www.nbcnews.com/politics/politics-news/rfk-jr-comes-home-anti-vaccine-group-commits-break-us-infectious-disease-rcna123551>

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.motherjones.com/politics/2024/11/robert-f-kennedy-jr-national-institutes-of-health/>

<sup>10</sup> <https://x.com/RobertKennedyJr/status/1849925311586238737>

<sup>11</sup>

<https://www.msnbc.com/rachel-maddow-show/maddowblog/rfk-jr-starts-fleshing-vision-trumps-second-term-rcna179000>

ACA Consumer Advocacy  
Advocates for Trans Equality  
American Humanist Association  
Autistic Self Advocacy Network  
Beta Cell Action  
Bronx United Progressives  
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)  
Center for WorkLife Law  
Children's Defense Fund  
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues  
Coalition of Labor Union Women  
Coalition on Human Needs  
Committee to Protect Health Care  
Debs-Jones-Douglass Institute  
Defend Public Health  
Doctors Council  
Doctors for America  
Drug Policy Alliance  
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities  
Equal Rights Advocates  
Fast-Track Cities Institute  
Feminist Majority Foundation  
Fight for the Future  
Healthcare NOW  
Indivisible  
Interfaith Alliance  
International Association of Providers of AIDS Care  
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health  
Jewish Voice for Peace Health Advisory Council  
Just Care USA  
Labor Campaign for Single Payer  
Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law  
League of Conservation Voters  
LatinoJustice PRLDEF  
MomsRising

MoveOn  
NAACP  
National Center for Youth Law  
National Consumers League  
National Council of Jewish Women  
Nurses for America  
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice  
National Organization for Women  
National Partnership for Women & Families  
National Women's Law Center  
People Power United  
Physicians for a Healthy Democracy  
Physicians for a National Health Program (PNHP)  
Popular Democracy  
Progressive Democrats of America  
Protect Our Care  
Public Advocacy for Kids (PAK)  
Public Citizen  
Reproductive Freedom for All  
SAFE Communities Coalition  
Social Security Works  
The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)  
The Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights  
Union of Concerned Scientists  
Universities Allied for Essential Medicines North America  
Voices for Progress  
Voices of Health Care Action

**State and Local Organizations**

AIDS Foundation Chicago  
AIDS Resource  
Arizona Families for Vaccines  
Bronx United Progressives  
Citizen Action/Illinois  
EverThrive Illinois

Florida Students for a National Health Program (SNaHP)  
Housing Works  
Indivisible Marin  
Louisiana Families for Vaccines  
Massachusetts Families for Vaccines  
Metro New York Health Care for All  
Montana Families for Vaccines  
New York Progressive Action Network (NYPAN)  
NYS Alliance for Retired Americans  
Oregon Families for Vaccines  
PSARA (Puget Sound Advocates for Retirement Action)  
Rise Up WV  
South Carolina Appleseed Legal Justice Center  
South Dakota Families for Vaccines  
Tennessee Families for Vaccines  
Unity Fellowship of Christ Church-NYC  
VOCAL-NY  
Washington Community Action Network  
Westchester for Change