

ONE HUNDRED NINETEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-3641  
Minority (202) 225-2927

September 11, 2025

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20024

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We write to demand accountability for the crisis that you have caused at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) as a result of your efforts to terminate CDC Director Dr. Susan Monarez. Your retaliatory decision has caused a cascade of chaos at the agency and resulted in key leadership resignations. By all reports, your decision to force Dr. Monarez from her position—to which the Senate confirmed her only a few weeks ago—was based on her refusal to blindly approve changes to national vaccine policy recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the COVID-19 vaccines and fire the civil servant CDC Center and Division Directors who questioned the veracity of the scientific data behind the demands from the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).<sup>1</sup> Dr. Monarez's abrupt termination and the additional losses of experienced leadership at CDC through resignations and reductions in force severely diminish the agency's ability to serve its mission to protect the health and safety of the nation and respond to emerging public health threats.<sup>2</sup> You are using your position as Secretary to promote the ideological anti-vaccine agenda you have led for decades, and your attacks against the people and programs at CDC push vaccines farther out of reach for many families and put all Americans' health at risk.

The announcement that Dr. Monarez would be fired was made on the same day it was reported that the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) had granted limited approvals of COVID-19 vaccines for this year.<sup>3</sup> At its next meeting later this month, ACIP is expected to

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<sup>1</sup> *White House fires CDC director who says RFK Jr. is 'weaponizing public health'*, The Washington Post (Aug. 28, 2025).

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*; *At least 600 CDC employees are getting final termination notices, union says*, CNN (Aug. 21, 2025).

<sup>3</sup> *FDA limits approval for new coronavirus vaccines to high-risk people*, The Washington Post (Aug. 27, 2025).

discuss and potentially vote on COVID-19 vaccine recommendations to the CDC Director.<sup>4</sup> The meeting comes after you terminated all 17 ACIP members in June, replaced them with seven new members, and recently announced seven more appointments—all of whom either share your vaccine skepticism or lack expertise in a field relevant to vaccines. It is clear that you made a blatantly self-interested decision to fire Dr. Monarez before the next ACIP meeting because she would not bend to political pressure you tried to impose.<sup>5</sup> This is a serious abuse of your trusted position. Adding further cause for alarm, the Acting CDC Director who has replaced Dr. Monarez has no expertise in medicine or science.<sup>6</sup>

Taken together, these events are clear evidence of your determination to ignore the scientific consensus in support of the safety and efficacy of the COVID-19 vaccines and instead ensure that CDC adopts policies that will significantly reduce access to vaccination for many people, particularly young children and pregnant women.

In meetings with Dr. Monarez before announcing that she would be fired, you also demanded that she fire officials and scientists at CDC, which she refused to do.<sup>7</sup> Dr. Debra Houry, CDC Chief Medical Officer; Dr. Demetre Daskalakis, CDC Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases; and Dr. Daniel Jernigan, CDC Director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, all resigned in protest of the firing of Dr. Monarez and what was described in one resignation letter as “the ongoing weaponization of public health.”<sup>8</sup> These officials made it clear that the reason they were leaving CDC was because HHS under your leadership is actively disregarding and dismantling the scientific expertise at CDC and instead using the agency to accomplish a political agenda that puts the American people at great risk.<sup>9</sup>

Based on these extremely troubling developments, we are requesting responses to questions about the events that led to Dr. Monarez’s termination as part of our ongoing oversight of your leadership at HHS and its impacts on the American people. Provide written responses to the questions listed below by September 25, 2025.

1. What was your justification for asking Dr. Monarez to either resign or be fired?
  - a. Provide specific details of the events or circumstances that HHS or the President determined were sufficient cause for her removal.

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<sup>4</sup> Department of Health and Human Services, *Meeting of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices*, 90 Fed. Reg. 42245 (Aug. 29, 2025).

<sup>5</sup> *RFK Jr. picks new members of influential vaccine committee after purge*, The Washington Post (June 11, 2025); *Kennedy to Add New Members to Vaccine Advisory Panel*, The New York Times (Sept. 3, 2025).

<sup>6</sup> *Who Is the New Acting C.D.C. Director?*, The New York Times (Aug. 29, 2025).

<sup>7</sup> *Monarez would not cross ‘red lines’ before she was fired, confidant says*, Politico (Aug. 28, 2025).

<sup>8</sup> *Showdown at CDC as director refuses to leave post amid pressure from Trump administration*, ABC News (Aug. 28, 2025).

<sup>9</sup> *Id.*

- b. Provide all written communication between you and HHS officials and between you and White House officials regarding the removal of Dr. Monarez.
2. Did you demand that Dr. Monarez agree to accept the recommendations from ACIP without CDC conducting any independent analysis of the scientific basis for those recommendations?
3. Did you demand that Dr. Monarez fire CDC employees? If so, who did you tell her to fire and for what reason?
4. Does the administration intend to name a new nominee for Senate confirmation, as required by law, to be CDC Director? If so, when does the administration expect to announce that nomination?
5. Does CDC intend to hire for the leadership positions now vacant after the most recent resignations?
6. Who is currently carrying out the responsibilities of the roles of Chief Medical Officer, Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, and Director of the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases? Provide names and job titles for CDC employees who have now been assigned those responsibilities.
7. Who are the CDC employees providing assistance for the next ACIP meeting scheduled for September 18-19, 2025? Who will represent CDC at the next ACIP meeting? Provide names and job titles for each employee in your response.
8. Is HHS currently considering appointing new members to ACIP, and if so, will these appointments be completed before the next ACIP meeting? Provide information on the vetting process and how HHS is assessing the qualifications and potential conflicts of interest of candidates.

We have written several letters to you with detailed questions about your rationale for the vaccine policy announcements you have made during your tenure as HHS Secretary reportedly without—and often in contradiction to—expert scientific analysis and advice.<sup>10</sup> One of these letters was sent as a follow up to your testimony during the June 24, 2025, budget hearing before

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<sup>10</sup> Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Rep. Diana DeGette, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health, Rep. Yvette Clarke, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services, and Susan Monarez Ph.D., Acting Director, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (Apr. 10, 2025); Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (July 10, 2025); Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Rep. Diana DeGette, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health, Rep. Yvette Clarke, Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations, to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (July 29, 2025).

our Committee to clarify your responses during the hearing that were unsubstantiated, unclear, or inaccurate.<sup>11</sup> That letter included a request for information about the vetting process of the seven ACIP members you appointed in June.<sup>12</sup> Despite your assurances during the budget hearing that we would receive responses to our letters, we have received none. Congress cannot conduct its oversight responsibilities if you refuse to answer basic questions about your decisions as Secretary. Your policy and personnel changes demonstrate that you are intentionally damaging vaccine access and affordability for Americans who wish to vaccinate themselves and their families. We expect that you will provide the answers to the questions in this letter by the date requested as well as responses to our previous requests for information.

If you have any questions about this request, please contact the Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-2927.

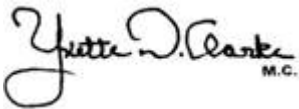
Sincerely,



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member



Diana DeGette  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health



Yvette Clarke  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Oversight  
and Investigations

cc: The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Chairman

The Honorable H. Morgan Griffith  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health

The Honorable John Joyce  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations

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<sup>11</sup> Letter from Rep. Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, House Committee on Energy and Commerce, to Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary, Department of Health and Human Services (July 10, 2025).

<sup>12</sup> *Id.*