

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 12, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We write to express our concerns regarding your appointment of two new members announced on January 13, 2026, Dr. Adam Urato and Dr. Kimberly Biss, to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>1</sup>

ACIP has previously served as our nation's evidence-based federal vaccine advisory panel, developing recommendations on the use of vaccines for adults and children. Since becoming Secretary of HHS, you have taken a troubling series of actions to undermine ACIP, beginning with the firing of all 17 ACIP members on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025, which have put all Americans at undue risk from vaccine preventable diseases. What was once a trusted panel of vaccine experts has become a hand-selected group of unqualified vaccine skeptics who have undermined years of scientific integrity and vetted public health practices.

There is vast evidence supporting the safety of vaccines.<sup>2</sup> Currently, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Vaccine and Immunization website page states, "Vaccines have a long history of successfully protecting people and communities against infectious diseases."<sup>3</sup> Yet, this administration continues to attack science-based public health measures like vaccines, which endangers American families.<sup>4</sup> For instance, on May 27, 2025, you announced unilaterally on your X account that COVID-19 vaccines for healthy children and healthy pregnant women have been removed from the CDC's recommended immunization schedule.<sup>5,6</sup> This announcement was not based in new data or scientific research and directly contradicted information on the CDC's website while completely bypassing ACIP.<sup>7</sup>

Most recently, Dr. Urato and Dr. Biss were appointed to serve on ACIP. Both OB/GYNs, Drs. Urato and Biss have a well-documented history of anti-vaccine ideology. Dr. Biss went as far to say that after COVID-19 she was "anti-vaccine."<sup>8</sup> At a congressional hearing on November 13, 2023, Dr. Biss claimed that the use of COVID-19 vaccines in pregnancy increased the risk of miscarriage.<sup>9</sup> Multiple studies have proven this claim false.<sup>10</sup> In fact, a 2023 study that used a prospective cohort found that COVID-19 vaccination in either male or

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<sup>1</sup> [Secretary Kennedy Appoints Two OB-GYNs to CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Safety of Vaccines Used for Routine Immunization in the United States: An Update](#)

<sup>3</sup> [How Vaccines are Developed and Approved for Use](#)

<sup>4</sup> [Experts Sound Alarm after ACIP Members Removed](#)

<sup>5</sup> <https://x.com/SecKennedy/status/1927368440811008138>

<sup>6</sup> [COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

<sup>7</sup> [CDC FAQs on Vaccination During Pregnancy Sow Doubt, Misuse Data](#)

<sup>8</sup> [New RFK Jr. pick for vaccine panel: 'I was not anti-vaccine. I am now.'](#)

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ozoyxd45ktE>

<sup>10</sup> [The risk of miscarriage following COVID-19 vaccination: a systematic review and meta-analysis. Human Reproduction, May 2023](#)

female partners at any time before conception was not associated with an increased rate of miscarriage.<sup>11</sup> A study published on January 21, 2026, in *Communications Medicine* also demonstrates that COVID-19 vaccination is not associated with a decrease in childbirth or an increase in recorded miscarriages.<sup>12</sup>

While science shows there is no correlation between COVID-19 vaccines and birth outcomes, evidence shows that severe COVID-19 infections have a negative impact on male fertility.<sup>13</sup> There is also an increased risk of complications among pregnant women who are infected with COVID-19. Pregnant women with COVID-19 are at a higher risk for gestational diabetes, gestational hypertension, pre-eclampsia, preterm birth, very preterm birth, small for gestational age, and stillbirth.<sup>14,15</sup> One study found that COVID-19 infection just before or during pregnancy was associated with maternal critical care admission or death.<sup>5</sup> Studies also show that babies born to those with COVID-19 are at an increased risk of respiratory distress syndrome and the need to be admitted to the neonatal intensive care unit.<sup>16,17</sup> Increased rates of neonatal death are also associated with mothers that have COVID-19.<sup>7</sup>

Notably, the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) and the Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine (SMFM) support COVID-19 vaccination during pregnancy. ACOG recommends that all pregnant and breastfeeding women receive an updated COVID-19 vaccine or booster.<sup>18</sup> The SMFM, made up of experts in high-risk pregnancy, also strongly recommend that pregnant patients receive COVID-19 vaccinations.<sup>19</sup>

The United States already has the highest rate of maternal deaths of any high-income country.<sup>20</sup> Data shows that pregnancy-related mortality drastically increased during the COVID-19 pandemic, increasing from a relatively stable rate of 17 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births to 24.9 and 33.2 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births in 2020 and 2021 respectively.<sup>21</sup> All of our public health professionals should be working to decrease these harrowing statistics. Yet, the Trump administration and the Department of Health and Humans Services under your leadership continues to politicize routine vaccinations, sowing doubt in patients and jeopardizing the health of our nation.

We are deeply concerned that the addition of Dr. Urato and Dr. Biss to ACIP do not make pregnant women and their children healthier. Instead, their false, harmful ideologies put women and their children's lives at risk. The opinions of Dr. Urato and Dr. Biss are not founded in evidence-based science, but in anti-vaccine rhetoric that harms public health as a whole.

<sup>11</sup> [A prospective cohort study of preconception COVID-19 vaccination and miscarriage. Human Reproduction, Dec 2023.](#)

<sup>12</sup> [COVID-19 vaccination carries no association with childbirth rates in Sweden | Nature Communications Medicine, Jan 2026](#)

<sup>13</sup> [COVID-19 infection was associated with poor sperm quality: a cross-sectional and longitudinal clinical observation study](#)

<sup>14</sup> [Neonatal and maternal outcomes following SARS-CoV-2 infection and COVID-19 vaccination: a population-based matched cohort study | Nature Communications, Aug 2023.](#)

<sup>15</sup> [COVID-19 diagnosis, vaccination during pregnancy, and adverse pregnancy outcomes of 865,654 women in England and Wales: a population-based cohort study - The Lancet Regional Health – Europe, Oct 2024.](#)

<sup>16</sup> [Maternal COVID-19 infection and risk of respiratory distress syndrome among newborns: a systematic review and meta-analysis. BMC Infectious Diseases, Nov 2024.](#)

<sup>17</sup> [Perinatal outcomes of newborns of COVID-19 infected pregnant women: An updated systematic review and meta-analysis. Cureus Journal of Medical Science, Feb 2024.](#)

<sup>18</sup> [COVID-19 Vaccination Considerations for Obstetric–Gynecologic Care | ACOG](#)

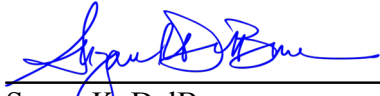
<sup>19</sup> [SMFM Reaffirms COVID-19 Vaccination Recommendations During Pregnancy - Society for Maternal-Fetal Medicine](#)

<sup>20</sup> [U.S. Maternal Mortality Crisis Comparison | Commonwealth Fund](#)

<sup>21</sup> [Maternal Mortality in the United States, 2025 | Commonwealth Fund](#)

As Members of Congress deeply concerned with the health of our nation and the safety of pregnant women and children, we urge you to remove vaccine skeptics from ACIP and reinstate the 17 experts who were previously fired.

Sincerely,



Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



Kelly Morrison  
Member of Congress



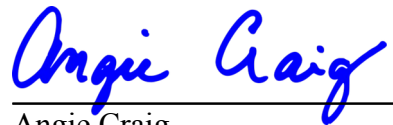
Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko  
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



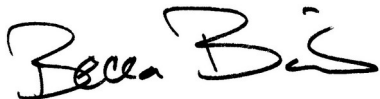
Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress



Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
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Rick Larsen  
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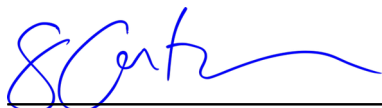
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Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



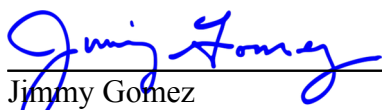
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Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



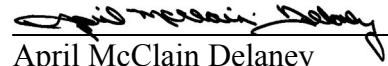
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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress



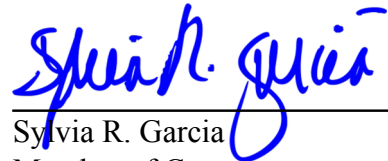
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April McClain Delaney  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress



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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



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Emily Randall  
Member of Congress



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Luz M. Rivas  
Member of Congress



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Maxine Dexter  
Member of Congress



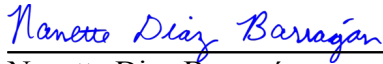
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Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



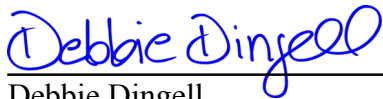
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



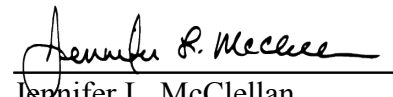
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Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



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Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress



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Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress



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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



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Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



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Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress



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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress



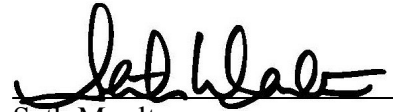
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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



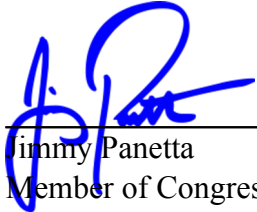
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Mark Takano  
Member of Congress



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Seth Moulton  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress