

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND GOVERNMENT REFORM

2157 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING

WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6143

MAJORITY (202) 225-5074
MINORITY (202) 225-5051
<https://oversight.house.gov>

February 13, 2026

The Honorable Gary Andres
Assistant Secretary for Legislation
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Mr. Andres:

I write with serious concern regarding the Department of Health and Human Services's (HHS) stonewalling of Congress over the past year under Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s leadership. It has been a year since Secretary Kennedy's confirmation on February 13, 2025, and in that time, HHS has failed to respond to more than 20 letters from Oversight Committee Democrats. These letters request information on issues of significant concern to Congress and the public, including HHS's actions on vaccines, food safety, and the dedicated federal workers who safeguard our health. The American people deserve answers. I demand you immediately cease HHS's stonewalling and ensure the Committee receives substantive responses to our inquiries.

In his confirmation hearing on January 29, 2025, Secretary Kennedy committed to providing "radical transparency," promising that "if Congress asks me for information, you will get it immediately."¹ Assuming that the Secretary was being truthful and did not make a false statement to Congress, it is your responsibility as the Assistant Secretary for Legislation to fulfill that commitment and communicate expediently with Congress. You also committed to being responsive to Congress at your own confirmation hearing last year, telling Senators that you would "work with both sides of the aisle to be accountable, responsive, and timely in our [HHS's] responses."² You also committed to being "as responsive, accountable, and transparent

¹ Senate Committee on Finance, *Hearing to Consider the Nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., of California, to be Secretary of Health and Human Services* (Jan. 29, 2025) (online at www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/hearingto-consider-the-nomination-of-robert-f-kennedy-jr-of-california-to-be-secretary-of-health-and-human-services).

² Senate Committee on Finance, *Hearing to Consider the Nominations of James O'Neill, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Andrea Joan Palm, resigned and Gary Andres, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Melanie Anne Egorin, resigned* (May 6, 2025) (online at www.finance.senate.gov/hearings/hearing-to-consider-the-nominations-of-james-oneill-of-california-to-be-deputy-secretary-of-health-and-human-services-vice-andrea-joan-palm-resigned-and-gary-andres-of-virginia-to-be-an-assistant-secretary-of-health-and-human-services-vice-melanie-anne-egorin-resigned).

as possible” in responses to Questions for the Record submitted after your confirmation hearing.³

Unfortunately, you have failed to live up to these commitments thus far. In 2025, Committee Democrats sent more than 20 letters to HHS. You have responded to only one. That is unacceptable.

This non-responsiveness extends to all manners of communication with Congress. HHS has refused to respond to basic requests for information from Committee Democrats and stated it is no longer providing briefings requested by Committee Democratic staff. In January, a member of your staff, Mr. Sloan McDonagh, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Legislation (Oversight), canceled a routine briefing for Committee Democratic staff to hear from the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) at the last moment.⁴ At this briefing, FDA was supposed to provide an update on the agency’s recent actions regarding vaccine review and approvals. HHS and FDA have made major changes to vaccine policy during the second Trump Administration, and it is your responsibility to be transparent with the public and responsive to congressional oversight on these issues of vital importance to public health.

A political appointee overriding an operating division and cancelling a briefing is cause for serious concern and suggests that Secretary Kennedy is attempting to hide information from Congress. Notably, in discussing the cancellation of this briefing, the same staffer, Mr. McDonagh, claimed that HHS has had a policy for years not to schedule briefings in response to minority requests.⁵ This is not true. And when Committee staff attempted to discuss this with Mr. McDonagh, he refused.

Instead of pursuing transparent, respectful collaboration between coequal branches of government, your office has refused to provide even basic answers to questions from Committee Democrats. Making false statements and hiding information from Congress is no small matter and must be answered for, whether you do so now by initiating respectful, open communication or later in a more formal setting.

Please see below for the list of letters that Committee Democrats have sent to the Department that have gone unanswered. We demand complete responses to each letter in a timely manner. Please provide responsive information, on a rolling basis, beginning no later than Friday, February 27, 2026.

1. Letter to HHS dated January 31, 2025, regarding scientific integrity;⁶

³ Senate Committee on Finance, Questions for the Record submitted to Gary Andrews from Senator Ron Wyden, Hearing to Consider the Nominations of James O’Neill, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Andrea Joan Palm, resigned, and Gary Andres, of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Health and Human Services, vice Melanie Anne Egorin, resigned (May 6, 2025) (online at www.finance.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/responses_to_questions_for_the_record_to_gary_andres.pdf).

⁴ Email on file with Committee Democrats.

⁵ Phone call with Committee Democratic staff, memorialized in email on file with Committee Democrats; Information shared with Committee Democrats.

⁶ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to

2. Letter to HHS dated March 6, 2025, regarding DOGE;⁷
3. Letter to HHS dated March 10, 2025, regarding reduction-in-force plans;⁸
4. Letter to HHS dated March 10, 2025, regarding official time;⁹
5. Letter to HHS dated March 12, 2025, regarding DOGE and AI;¹⁰
6. Letter to HHS dated March 20, 2025, regarding FOIA;¹¹
7. Letter to HHS dated March 29, 2025, regarding vaccines;¹²
8. Letter to HHS dated April 1, 2025, regarding avian flu;¹³
9. Letter to HHS dated April 8, 2025, regarding terminations at FDA;¹⁴

Acting Secretary Dorothy Fink, Department of Health and Human Services (Jan. 31, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-01-31.%20GEC%20to%20Fink-HHS%20re.%20Scientific%20Integrity.pdf>).

⁷ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Mar. 6, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-06-gec-to-24-cfo-act-agencies-re-doge.pdf>).

⁸ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Mar. 10, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-10-gec-to-24-cfo-agencies-re-rifs.pdf>).

⁹ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Mar. 10, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-10-gec-to-24-cfo-agencies-re-official-time.pdf>).

¹⁰ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Mar. 12, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-12-gec-to-24-cfo-agencies-re-doge-ai.pdf>).

¹¹ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Mar. 20, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-20-gec-to-24-cfo-agencies-re-foia-staffing.pdf>).

¹² Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Mar. 29, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-03-29-gec-to-hhs-re-vaccines.pdf>).

¹³ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Apr. 1, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-04-01-gec-krishnamoorthi-et-al-to-jfkjr-re-bird-flu.pdf>).

¹⁴ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Apr. 8, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-04-08-ranking-members-gec-rk-and-ss-to-hhs-jfkjr-re-fda-terminations.pdf>).

10. Letter to CDC dated April 24, 2025, regarding FOIA;¹⁵
11. Letter to HHS dated June 2, 2025, regarding MAHA report;¹⁶
12. Letter to HHS dated June 10, 2025, regarding COVID vaccines;¹⁷
13. Letter to HHS dated June 10, 2025, regarding ACIP terminations;¹⁸
14. Letter to HHS dated June 11, 2025, regarding avian flu;¹⁹
15. Letter to HHS dated June 23, 2025, regarding FDA and food safety;²⁰
16. Letter to CDC dated July 10, 2025, regarding ACIP and vaccines;²¹
17. Letter to HHS dated July 17, 2025, regarding HIV funding cuts;²²

¹⁵ Letter from Ranking Member Gerald E. Connolly, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Acting Director Susan Monarez, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services (Apr. 24, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-04-24.gec-to-cdc-monarez-re-foia.pdf>).

¹⁶ Letter from Acting Ranking Member Steven Lynch, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (June 2, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-06-02-lynch-to-hhs-jfk-jt-re-maha-report.pdf>).

¹⁷ Letter from Acting Ranking Member Steven Lynch, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (June 10, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-06-10-combined-letters-to-rfk-jr.pdf>).

¹⁸ Letter from Acting Ranking Member Steven Lynch, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (June 10, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-06-10-combined-letters-to-rfk-jr.pdf>).

¹⁹ Letter from Acting Ranking Member Steven Lynch, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (June 11, 2025) (online at https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-06-11.lynch-krishnamoorthi-et-al-to-rfk-jr-re-avian-flu_0.pdf).

²⁰ Letter from Acting Ranking Member Steven Lynch, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (June 23, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-06-23.lynch-krishnamoorthi-subramanyam-to-rfk-re-fda-food-inspections-follow-up.pdf>).

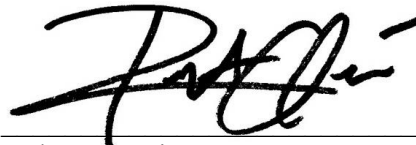
²¹ Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to Chief of Staff Matthew Buzzelli, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services (July 10, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-07-10.rg-rk-to-cdc-re-acip-and-vaccines.pdf>).

²² Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, et al., Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (July 17, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-07-17.garcia-krishnamoorthi-to-hhs-rfk-jr-re-trump-hiv-funding-cuts.pdf>).

18. Letter to HHS dated August 15, 2025, regarding the Office of Inspector General;²³
19. Letter to CDC dated August 18, 2025, regarding the shooting at CDC;²⁴
20. Letter to HHS dated October 3, 2025, regarding reduction-in-force plans;²⁵ and
21. Letter to HHS dated December 22, 2025, regarding ACIP and vaccines.²⁶

The Committee on Oversight and Government Reform is the principal oversight committee of the House of Representatives and has broad authority to investigate “any matter” at “any time” under House Rule X. If you have any questions about this request, please contact Committee Democratic staff at (202) 225-5051. Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Robert Garcia
Ranking Member

cc: The Honorable James Comer, Chairman
The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary
Mr. Sloan McDonagh, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Legislation (Oversight)

²³ Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, et al. Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Department of Health and Human Services (Aug. 15, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-08-15.garcia-et-al-to-24-cfo-act-agencies-re-oigs.pdf>).

²⁴ Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Susan Monarez, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Department of Health and Human Services (Aug. 18, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-08-18.garcia-to-cdc-re-safety-after-shooting.pdf>).

²⁵ Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, et al. Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Department of Health and Human Services (Oct. 3, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-10-03.garcia-et-al-to-24-cfo-act-agencies-re-shutdown-rif-merged-all.pdf>).

²⁶ Letter from Ranking Member Robert Garcia, Committee on Oversight and Government Reform, to the Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. Department of Health and Human Services (Dec. 22, 2025) (online at <https://oversightdemocrats.house.gov/imo/media/doc/2025-12-22garciaohhsreaciphepatitisb.pdf>).