

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>

Rep. Suhas Subramanyam Committee on Oversight and Government Reform “Restoring Trust in FDA: Rooting Out Illicit Products” April 9, 2025

Today’s hearing comes at a critical moment for public health and safety. All Americans should be able to trust that our government is working to ensure their food and medicine will be safe and affordable.

Over the past two months, however, the Trump Administration has purged thousands of Food and Drug Administration (FDA) workers, putting this essential mission and American lives at risk.

Last week, the Administration purged 10,000 people at the Department, including 3,500 FDA employees. This was on top of a purge of approximately 1,000 FDA workers in February.

Secretary Kennedy subsequently admitted that 20% of last week’s purges should not have happened. He tried to brush it off, saying, “[We’ll make mistakes.](#)” But how long will it take them to realize the full extent of the mistakes they’ve made? How long will it take for them to try—and very possibly fail—to undo those mistakes? And how many Americans will get sick or die in that time?

The FDA is supposed to make sure that our children have the vaccines they need to survive outbreaks of preventable diseases like [measles](#), which has killed at least two children in the U.S. since February and sickened more Americans in two months than in the entirety of 2024.

The FDA is supposed to protect us from counterfeit drugs and contaminated infant formula, which are serious, bipartisan concerns. But how is the agency supposed to stop dangerous, illicit products from entering American homes and threatening American lives when underfunded food and drug inspection teams are being cut even more? [170 employees](#) from FDA’s Office of Inspections and Investigations were reportedly let go last week.

And let me tell you about some of the expertise we are losing because of this Administration’s actions:

- They fired the people responsible for regulating e-cigarettes and ensuring that predatory companies cannot market vapes to children.
- They fired people responsible for monitoring drugs for side effects and updating warning labels.

- They have fired the scientists monitoring bird flu and taking steps to prevent it from killing people.
- They fired the scientists with expertise in fighting heavy metals, toxins, and additives in our food supply have been fired.
- And they fired the people who monitor prescription drug shortages and ensure that Americans have access to affordable prescription medications

How is any of this making America healthier? We all know the answer to that question: it's not, and people are going to die.

As a dad, I'm especially concerned by the Administration undoing the progress we've made to protect babies from contaminated infant formula and formula shortages. And we should all be concerned by the risk posed by contaminated meat and produce.

This chaos will keep us in the dark about looming shortages of essential drugs like antibiotics and chemotherapy drugs, and it will leave people no choice but to pay for pricey brand-name drugs because there are no FDA employees to approve generic versions. In the name of efficiency, this administration even fired employees who were critical of approving new medications, meaning Americans will have to wait longer for new treatments – if they get them at all.

One of those Americans is my constituent, a former teacher who spent 35 years of her life working at the Department of Education. She has Idiopathic Pulmonary Fibrosis, a terminal lung condition that took her aunt's life and is slowly taking hers. It's a rare disease that doesn't get much funding, but she had hope.

A drug to slow down the disease received the FDA's Breakthrough Therapy Designation in 2022, and trials showed it might actually stop the progression of her disease. Her doctor anticipated FDA approval this year. But the FDA's funding cuts and firing of researchers and staff who sit on the approval committees has made this impossible. This Administration is stripping both hope and a life-saving medication out of the hands of Americans who need it most.

The FDA can and *must* do more for Americans. Addressing our country's chronic disease epidemic, ensuring our children are set up to live long and healthy lives, getting more life-saving medications to those who need them, and ensuring the food on our shelves is safe and wholesome should be at the top of the to-do list. But rather than making it better and more efficient, the FDA is left ransacked and reeling from the chaos and destruction of the Trump Administration. It's unclear whether the agency can even perform some of its most basic functions.

I don't know how much clearer I can be; these health cuts will kill people. They will make us less safe and less healthy.

I was not elected to this office to watch the people we serve suffer from diseases awaiting new treatments while this administration dismantles the offices that offer hope. It's the responsibility of this Committee to conduct meaningful oversight. If we are not talking about this and doing something about it, then we are not doing our jobs.

I yield back.

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Contact: Alexandra Bell, Communications Director (202) 226-5181