

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 4, 2025

The Honorable Brett Guthrie  
Chairman  
House Committee on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Morgan Griffith  
Chairman  
Subcommittee on Health, House Committee  
on Energy and Commerce  
2125 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Guthrie and Chairman Griffith:

As you know, last Wednesday, August 27, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that Dr. Susan Monarez was no longer Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).<sup>1</sup> Dr. Monarez was confirmed by the Senate to the position on July 29, 2025, and had served in the position for less than a month when this announcement was made.<sup>2</sup>

The same day, three other senior CDC leaders announced their resignations. They include the two senior-most executives responsible for emerging infectious diseases, respiratory infections such as measles and influenza, vaccine policy, and vaccine safety research. The substantial chaos at the agency and the simultaneous departure of the nation's experts in critical infectious disease topic areas leaves the agency weakened and our nation's public health infrastructure extremely vulnerable to potential biosecurity threats.

Dr. Monarez was forced out for refusing to rubber stamp unscientific guidance related to vaccines and for refusing to fire respected senior CDC staff.<sup>3</sup> It is Dr. Monarez's role, as Director of CDC, to oversee the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and determine whether to approve vaccine recommendations made by members of the Advisory Committee. She was extensively asked about her position on vaccines during her confirmation hearing and has remained consistent in her approach to upholding evidence-based policymaking. The fact that she was forced out for following the evidence and the science is disturbing, to say the least, and is part of a clear pattern of Secretary Kennedy's direct attack on scientific integrity in favor of his extremist unscientific views.

Dr. Monarez and the other leaders left the CDC just weeks after a deadly shooting occurred at the CDC main campus by an individual who blamed the COVID-19 vaccine "for making him depressed and suicidal."<sup>4</sup> The shooting resulted in the death of a responding police officer and nearly two hundred rounds fired into CDC buildings. In the wake of the CDC shooting, over 750 current and former federal health employees signed a letter describing Secretary Kennedy as fueling vaccine mistrust that contributed to the violence and called upon

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/28/health/rfk-jr-susan-monarez-cdc-vaccines.html>

<sup>2</sup> *Id.*

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.politico.com/news/2025/08/28/monarez-cdc-vaccines-rfk-trump-00533358>

<sup>4</sup> <https://abcnews.go.com/world-news-tonight-with-david-muirT/video/cdc-shooter-believed-covid-vaccine-made-suicidal-sources-124529774>

him to denounce the attack and stop spreading inaccurate health information.<sup>5</sup> His response has been grossly inadequate. While CDC buildings are still undergoing repairs and clean-up from bullet holes and shattered windows, the Trump Administration saw fit to terminate the head of the CDC.

Dr. Monarez is an experienced scientist and senior executive leader in federal government. She most recently served as Deputy Director of the Advanced Research Projects for Health (ARPA-H), where she led initiatives in artificial intelligence and health technology.<sup>6</sup> She has held multiple positions in the White House, including in the Office of Science and Technology Policy and on the National Security Council, where she led efforts to combat antimicrobial resistance and improved pandemic preparedness.<sup>7</sup> President Trump posted on Truth Social regarding her nomination that “Dr. Monarez understands the importance of protecting our children, our communities, and our future.”<sup>8</sup> Notably, Dr. Monarez was confirmed with the full support of Senate Republicans.

Congress has an obligation to the Constitution and to the American people to conduct rigorous oversight of the activities of the executive. It is imperative that we, as the Committee with jurisdiction over HHS and CDC specifically and the public health of the nation broadly, ensure public health is protected. So far, despite numerous Democratic requests for oversight hearings into Secretary Kennedy’s dangerous leadership of HHS, this Republican majority has abdicated its responsibility. This Committee should immediately call the following individuals to testify regarding the departure of Director Monarez and the place of scientific expertise and evidence-based policymaking at HHS under Secretary Kennedy:

- Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., in his capacity as Secretary of Health and Human Services
- James O’Neill, in his capacity as Deputy Secretary of Health and Human Services
- Matt Buckham, in his capacity as HHS Chief of Staff
- Stefanie Spear, in her capacity as HHS Principal Deputy Chief of Staff
- Dr. Susan Monarez
- Dr. Debra Houry
- Dr. Demetre Daskalakis
- Dr. Daniel Jernigan

Congress and the American people deserve to hear directly from these individuals regarding the circumstances that led to the departure of Director Monarez and other senior CDC leaders. We are alarmed by reports that Dr. Monarez was directed to resign for refusing to engage in regulatory actions driven by ideology rather than science and what is best for public health. The Committee on Energy and Commerce must immediately hold hearings to gain a full picture of this matter, the state of CDC, and the risks to Americans’ health and lives if scientific competence is not restored.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/08/20/nx-s1-5507208/after-shooting-cdc-workers-demand-more-protections-from-hhs-secretary>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.npr.org/sections/shots-health-news/2025/07/29/nx-s1-5484124/cdc-director-monarez-confirmed-senate>

<sup>7</sup> *Id.*

<sup>8</sup> <https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114219231809224627>

It is long past time for Committee Republicans to join us in conducting vigorous oversight of the nation's public health system in service of our constituents.

Sincerely,



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Diana DeGette  
Ranking Member  
Subcommittee on Health  
Committee on Energy and  
Commerce



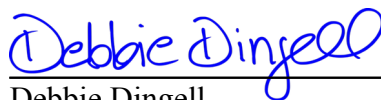
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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy and  
Commerce



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Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



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Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



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Nanette Diaz Barragan  
Member of Congress



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress



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Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



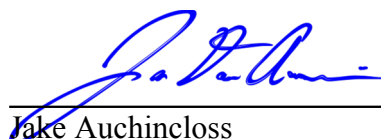
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Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



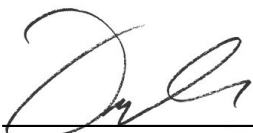
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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress

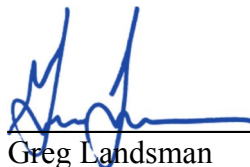


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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. Carter', written over a horizontal line.

Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Greg Landsman', written over a horizontal line.

Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress