

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 10, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

Record numbers of Americans are contracting measles, falling sick with a parasite, and struggling to afford the health care that they need. At the same time, you are failing to carry out your duties as the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). We are concerned that, instead of addressing the struggles that Americans face today in trying to keep their families safe and healthy, you are using taxpayer dollars to promote your personal brand.

In just the past few months, the United States has faced life-threatening public health challenges that you have failed to adequately address. Since President Trump was sworn in, more than 4,600 Americans – mostly children – have been infected by measles, and at least three have died. During this Administration, we have seen more cases of measles in the United States than in the previous 24 years combined. Yet you have made nearly no effort to help families protect their children from the life-threatening impacts of measles, and infections continue to skyrocket: in September of 2026, we have already surpassed the total number of measles cases reported in all of 2025. In fact, this is a predictable consequence of your longstanding crusade against vaccines.

While measles outbreaks continue to make children sick in every region of the country, you are also failing to protect Americans from historic outbreaks of foodborne illness. As many as 20,000 people have reported infections from cyclospora, a parasite that causes severe gastrointestinal distress, and two people have now died as a result of this uncontrolled outbreak. As your Department failed to get a handle on cyclospora, people in at least 32 states have also been infected by salmonella, and dozens have been hospitalized.

On a bipartisan basis, Congress has provided your Department with targeted resources to fight outbreaks of disease. For example, the HHS Office of the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs has received significant funding to lead national communications campaigns about public health emergencies. However, it appears that you are not using this Office or comparable Department resources to address ongoing public health crises.

Instead, you appear to be directing taxpayer dollars and official federal resources to produce vanity projects. These self-promotion projects include a new podcast and a new show that are each centered around your personal brand instead of the responsibility of your Department to protect the health of all Americans. On “The Secretary Kennedy Podcast,” you appear to be using official HHS resources to discuss topics such as “biohacking” while ignoring the pressing outbreaks that Americans are facing every day. You also appear to be spending official HHS resources to personally host a cooking show called “The Real Food Show.” A recent episode of this show, paid for with taxpayer dollars, featured you discussing “The Secret to the PERFECT

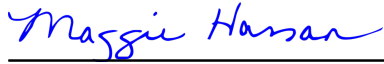
Omelet.” Both projects are on official government websites and state that they were produced by the Department of Health and Human Services.

To better understand how you are allocating the Department’s resources, we request answers to the following questions by September 30, 2026:

1. How much official time have you spent in meetings, briefings, and public engagements related to coordinating a response to address the following outbreaks?
 - a. Measles
 - b. Cyclospora
 - c. Salmonella
 - d. Hantavirus
 - e. Ebola
2. How much has the Department spent on efforts to respond to the measles outbreak and promote vaccination against measles?
3. Please describe the efforts and resources that you have dedicated to hiring staff at the Centers for Disease Control & Prevention and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration with the following areas of expertise:
 - a. Epidemiology
 - b. Infectious disease
 - c. Laboratory science
 - d. Public health informatics and surveillance
 - e. Public health communication
4. How much official time have you personally spent in producing the “The Real Food Show” and “The Secretary Kennedy Podcast?”
5. How many federal employees are working on “The Real Food Show” and “The Secretary Kennedy Podcast”, and how many hours are staff spending on these projects?
6. What are the total budget and expenditures thus far for the Department’s production and promotion of "The Real Food Show" and "The Secretary Kennedy Podcast"?
7. From where in the HHS operating budget is funding being drawn down to obtain the materials, production resources, staff resources, and promotion budget for these shows?
8. Please provide all communications, including contracts, statements of work, invoices, and payment records, between the Office of the Secretary and any production companies, media consultants, personal branding vendors, or third-party contractors involved in the "The Real Food Show" and “The Secretary Kennedy Podcast.”
9. Did the Department’s ethics officials review and approve the use of taxpayer dollars for “The Real Food Show” and “The Secretary Kennedy Podcast?” If so, please provide all associated opinions, guidance, memoranda, and conditions.

Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.

Sincerely,



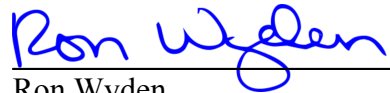
Margaret Wood Hassan
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



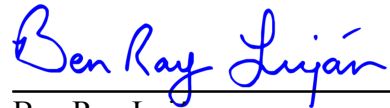
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator
Ranking Member, Committee
on Finance



Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator