

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

August 24, 2026

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

We write with outrage over the numerous actions taken by the Trump administration to threaten and limit access to reproductive health care for women and girls across the country, including essential preventive care, contraceptives, and abortion care. The decades-long Republican attacks on reproductive health, rights, and justice have culminated in a nation where women today have less autonomy over their bodies and their medical care than their grandmothers did. And with women already suffering and dying as a result of your policies, you are doubling down with an even more aggressive and dangerous anti-women agenda.

The decision in *Dobbs v. Jackson Women's Health Organization* that overturned *Roe v. Wade* and removed the constitutional right to an abortion has had life-threatening consequences for women across America, especially in states with abortion bans. We know that Republicans' ultimate goal is to ban all abortions nationwide. Currently, women in 13 states live under total abortion bans and those in 28 other states live under gestational bans, some as early as six weeks—often before a woman even knows she is pregnant. These bans create a system in which women can't get the health care they need, requiring them to travel across state lines when abortion care via telehealth is unavailable, and in some circumstances forcing them to carry a pregnancy to term. In too many devastating cases, these bans have forced women to wait until their lives are at risk before they can receive adequate care. A 2025 report released by the Gender Policy Equity Institute showed that women living in states that banned abortion were nearly two times as likely to die during pregnancy, childbirth, or soon after giving birth, compared to women living in states where abortion is legal and accessible.¹

Despite proclaiming to be a “pro-family” administration, the Trump administration has orchestrated a coordinated attempt to limit access to reproductive health care and move closer to a national abortion ban by whatever means necessary. From partnering with Congressional Republicans to defund clinics that provide preventive care like annual physicals and cervical cancer exams, because they also provide abortion care; terminating women's health research at the National Institutes of Health; withholding millions in already awarded and appropriated Title X funding, the only federal stream solely dedicated to family planning; to terminating more than 50 Teen Pregnancy Prevention Grants, a program that has shown great success in lowering the teen birth rate; this administration has stopped at nothing to strip access to providers, basic services, and health information. Instead, the Trump administration has promoted, through moms.gov, “crisis pregnancy centers” that spread misinformation and employ deceptive practices to further an anti-abortion agenda. People cannot make informed decisions about their bodies if they do not have medically accurate information to begin with, or access to providers who can provide that education. Furthermore, the recently proposed Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulation on federal financial assistance will politicize the entire grants process, undermining federal agencies' ability to carry out the programs enacted by Congress and significantly hampering the grantees' work on programs and services related to women's and reproductive health. The dismantling and

¹ <https://thegepi.org/maternal-mortality-abortion-bans/>

politicization of reproductive health care programs is a thinly veiled attempt at ensuring politicians have even more control over women's bodies.

The administration has also systematically attacked mifepristone, one of the medications commonly used for abortion care. Mifepristone is safe and effective, has been used for decades by over 7.5 million people since its approval by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2000, and is part of the two-drug regimen used in more than 60% of abortions in the U.S. each year. In September 2025, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced that it would conduct, through the FDA, "its own review of the evidence" on the safety and effectiveness of mifepristone, despite the overwhelming evidence already proving this. This exercise seeks to disregard the vast safety evidence of mifepristone and further politicize the medication as part of your attempts to limit abortion access nationwide. The Department of Justice has repeatedly cited the FDA's baseless "review" in ongoing litigation brought by anti-abortion extremists in an attempt to gut access to mifepristone, including in a brief filed at the Fifth Circuit just last month. In November 2025, all Democratic Senators sent a letter to you and then-Commissioner Makary demonstrating our concern over this review and requesting additional information.² We have yet to receive a response.

Congressional Republicans and the Trump administration often pretend these restrictions to reproductive health care are designed to give power back to states. However, the Trump administration continues to undermine this argument and attack states that do protect access to reproductive health care. Most recently, the then-Acting Attorney General of the United States, Todd Blanche stated on a private call that the Trump administration's anti-abortion efforts are "taking longer than we want" and promised that the Department of Justice (DOJ) is working hand in hand with HHS, the FDA, the White House, and President Trump's team to get permanent solutions. And in Blanche's July confirmation hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee, he doubled down on restricting abortion, committing DOJ's resources to an effort clearly aimed at further limiting access to mifepristone. In March 2026, the Trump administration misused the Weldon Amendment, a harmful refusal of care law, to launch an investigation into 13 states with laws that require state-regulated insurance plans to cover abortion care.³ In April, the U.S. Government Accountability Office (GAO), at the request of the Republican Speaker of the House, House Majority Leadership, and other Members of Congress, sent interview requests to a number of states that require abortion coverage in their Affordable Care Act (ACA) Marketplace Plans. If the administration's goal is to make abortion care a state issue, the federal government should not be interfering and investigating states with lawful abortion protections.

On July 3, the Trump administration released its 2026 Unified Agenda and annual Regulatory Plan. This agenda includes regulatory actions that seek to entrench "fetal personhood," the idea that fertilized eggs, embryos, and fetuses should receive full rights and legal protections. Granting "fetal personhood" could have enormous consequences, and could ultimately lead to criminal charges and conviction of pregnant and postpartum women for seeking necessary health care.⁴ The agenda also includes a regulatory action that may roll back access to abortions for unaccompanied immigrant children in detention, a policy that the first Trump administration tried to implement in 2017.⁵ After legal proceedings, the 2017 policy was eventually abandoned and replaced with a new policy that prohibited the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) staff from interfering with unaccompanied pregnant minors' access to abortion.⁶

² <https://www.murray.senate.gov/wp-content/uploads/2025/11/11.06.2025-Letter-to-HHS-and-FDA-re-Mifepristone-Review-FINAL.pdf>

³ <https://apnews.com/article/abortion-investigation-weldon-amendment-hhs-trump-ef31c81d25b7f38831258098d6c9e516>

⁴ <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=202510&RIN=0970-AD33>

⁵ <https://www.reginfo.gov/public/do/eAgendaViewRule?pubId=202510&RIN=0970-AD34>

The attacks on reproductive health care don't stop there. Just last month, on July 7, the Department of Justice asked the Third U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to allow any employer to opt out of the ACA's requirement that insurance plans include coverage of the full range of birth control without additional cost, a provision that has helped millions of people to use contraceptives more consistently and effectively, furthering their health and wellbeing. The FDA has also newly imposed a Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategy (REMS) on two birth control products, adding new burdensome certification, reporting, and dispensing requirements. Of note, the use of REMS is extremely rare; of the over 20,000 FDA-approved drugs, there are only 73 drugs that have a REMS. This administration has imposed REMS on these products under the guise of ensuring the benefits of the device outweigh its risk of complications, however the agency has failed to answer detailed questions about the research that informed its actions. We believe that, just as politicians shouldn't be able to make decisions about women's bodies, neither should their employers. Decisions about birth control, pregnancy, and abortion should be made between a patient and their provider.

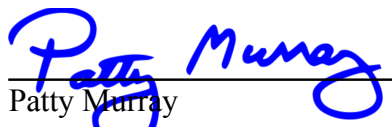
If this administration was truly committed to helping families, President Trump would work to lower the cost of living and make health care and child care more affordable and accessible. Instead, the President has stated on the record that we must prioritize "fighting wars" and that we simply cannot afford to address these issues. In fact, in the year and a half they've been in charge, President Trump and Congressional Republicans have made the largest cut to Medicaid in our nation's history. This action directly impacts reproductive health care access for women, as Medicaid pays for more than half of the births in our country and has already led hospitals to close their doors and cut services.

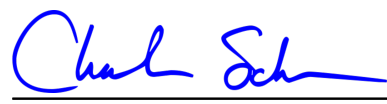
From the moment Donald Trump returned to office, this administration has waged a relentless, coordinated assault on women's health and the freedom to make their own medical decisions. Stripping away the emergency-room protections that guarantee women can get life-saving care, moving to restrict access to safe and effective medication like mifepristone, gutting the maternal health programs that keep moms and babies safe, and so much else—your policies constitute serious attacks on women's health that are not rooted in safety or science, but would simply advance an extreme ideological agenda that is wildly out of touch with America's pro-choice majority.

Women are less safe, less free, and less able to see a doctor today because of the choices this administration has made. Senate Democrats will keep fighting in every way possible to protect every woman's right to the care they need and the freedom to make their own decisions about their own body and their own future.

CC: Russell Vought, Director of the Office of Management and Budget
CC: Todd Blanche, Attorney General

Sincerely,


Patty Murray
United States Senator


Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator

⁶ <https://www.aclu.org/news/immigrants-rights/victory-after-three-years-of-battling-in-court-the-trump-administration-abandons-its-policy-of-banning-abortion-for-unaccompanied-immigrant-minors>



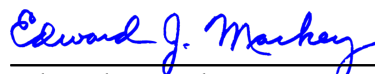
Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Jeanne Shaheen
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



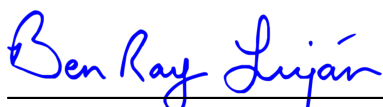
Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



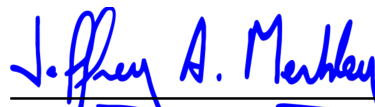
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



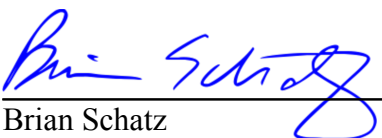
Tammy Baldwin
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin
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Richard Blumenthal
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Brian Schatz
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Christopher A. Coons
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Gary C. Peters
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Tina Smith
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Jack Reed
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Cory A. Booker
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Bernard Sanders
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Elizabeth Warren
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