

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

December 23, 2025

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

Dear Secretary Kennedy,

I write today with grave concern regarding the cancellation of funding to the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP).

The AAP is headquartered in Itasca, Illinois, within my congressional district, and represents more than 67,000 pediatricians nationwide who are dedicated to the physical, mental, and social health of infants, children, adolescents, and young adults.¹ For nearly a century, the AAP has been a cornerstone of evidence-based pediatric care and public health. Yet HHS has abruptly terminated seven grants totaling more than \$18 million awarded to this organization.²

These grants supported lifesaving initiatives to reduce sudden infant death, improve adolescent health outcomes, prevent fetal alcohol spectrum disorders, and ensure the early identification of autism. HHS has claimed that these programs “no longer align with the Department’s mission or priorities.”³ I find it profoundly disturbing that preventing infant deaths, protecting adolescent health, and identifying developmental disabilities early are now considered misaligned with the mission of the federal agency charged with safeguarding public health.

This decision is especially troubling given its timing. The funding cancellations came shortly after the AAP challenged Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.’s vaccine policies in federal court, raising serious concerns that this action may represent retaliation against a respected medical organization for exercising its legal rights and defending science-based public health policy.⁴

Administration officials have justified the funding cuts by pointing to the AAP’s use of so-called “identity-based language,” including references to racial health disparities and the term “pregnant people.”⁵ In doing so, the Administration is willfully ignoring well-documented and persistent health inequalities that exist in communities across the United States. Refusing to acknowledge these disparities does not make them disappear—it endangers lives. The consequences of this decision will be borne by children and families who already face the greatest barriers to care.

This is an unacceptable and reckless approach to governing an agency entrusted with protecting the health and well-being of our nation’s children. Officials at HHS, including those at the Health Resources and

¹ <https://www.aap.org/en/>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2025/dec/17/american-academy-pediatrics-funding-rfk>

³ <https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2025/12/17/aap-hhs-funding-rfk/>

⁴ <https://www.cnn.com/2025/12/17/health/hhs-american-academy-of-pediatrics-grants>

⁵ *Id.*

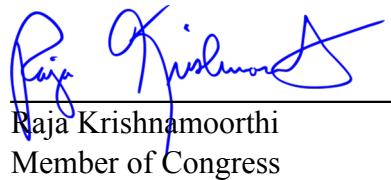
Services Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have a responsibility to support scientifically rigorous, evidence-based research and interventions. It is critical that federal funding decisions are guided by science, public health need, and the best interests of children, not political ideology.

To understand how HHS is approaching grant funding, I request that you provide the following information by January 20, 2026:

1. All documents and communications related to the decision to cancel \$18.6 million in grants to the American Academy of Pediatrics
2. An outline of projects and initiatives that will be funded to replace work that AAP was performing in relation to sudden infant deaths, adolescent health, fetal alcohol syndrome prevention, and early autism detection;
3. HHS, CDC, and HRSA's banned words and ideologies when considering projects for federal funding;
4. A list of all HHS, CDC, and HRSA's projects that have been cancelled because they "no longer align with the Department's mission or priorities."

AAP's chief executive and executive vice president said, "The sudden withdrawal of these funds will directly impact and potentially harm infants, children, youth, and their families in communities across the United States."⁶ It is absolutely critical that HHS seriously reconsiders this funding decision to protect our children and ensure there are no delays in care for those who need it the most.

Sincerely,



Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress

⁶ Id.