

Secretary Kennedy defends MAHA budget cuts before Congress

Secretary Kennedy defended the Trump Administration's proposed budget cuts to the HHS before the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee on Health.

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This morning, Secretary Kennedy defended the Trump Administration's proposed budget cuts to the department of Health and Human

Services (HHS) before the House Energy and Commerce subcommittee on Health. In opening, Secretary Kennedy stated his goal was to create the "most compassionate" HHS in American history. Congress members' questions touched on the [Bethesda Declaration](#), cancer research, FDA modernization, university related research funding, the ACIP and vaccine recommendations, Alzheimer's research, DEIA, and the East Palestine chemical fire.

Secretary Kennedy opened by identifying seven current focuses of HSS under his leadership including combatting the opioid crisis, ending gain of function and DEI research, and using Artificial Intelligence (AI) to better manage data. While Republican subcommittee members were quick to commend Kennedy's fresh approach to managing HHS, Democratic members expressed deep concern that the proposed cuts would negatively impact public health and the American scientific ecosystem.

Congresswoman DeGette cited the Bethesda Declaration, a whistleblower document authored and signed by over 400 current NIH employees and endorsed by over 60 Nobel laureates and 30,000 concerned individuals across the US, describing ways that current NIH policies force federal employees at the agency to go against their oath of office and the NIH mission. Kennedy refused to commit to protecting the NIH signatories from retaliation.

Secretary Kennedy conceded [that he did not fact check the MAHA report](#) that was found to have cited papers that do not exist and that incorrectly characterized studies. Kennedy made continued reference the administration's so-called "Gold Standard Science" throughout the hearing, while touting pseudoscientific studies, that experts say "do not meet the standards set."



At one point, Kennedy was asked to revoke a statement directed toward Congressman Pallone, accusing him of taking money from pharmaceutical companies to endorse vaccine uptake — an accusation Kennedy was forced to retract.

"Today we saw why Kennedy is not fit to lead public health in America and we saw why NIH employees stood up and wrote the Bethesda Declaration. People will die preventable deaths, entire economic sectors will be wiped out, hundreds of thousands of people will lose their jobs, and America will not be healthier", says Colette Delawalla, Executive Director of [Stand Up for Science](#).

Congresswoman Schrier described Secretary Kennedy's actions: "You lied to Senator Cassidy. You have lied to the American people. You have lied to parents about vaccines for 20 years...I will lay all responsibility for every death from a vaccine preventable illness at your feet."

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About Stand Up for Science: Stand Up for Science is a grassroots Washington, D.C. based 501(c)4 non-profit organization mobilizing the fight for science and democracy. We formed Stand Up for Science within days of executive orders breaking down federal science agencies. Weeks later, on March 7th, our first National Day of Action, we mobilized over 50,000 people at 170+ events across the world in support of science. We received coverage from local, national, and international outlets, including Science, Nature, The New York Times, Forbes Magazine, Scientific American, STAT News, and The Scientist. An opinion piece written by our founding leadership team is also available in Nature Human Behavior: "Why we organized 'Stand Up for Science.'"

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