

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2025

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

We write to you today because the illegal mass firing of probationary staff within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is already undermining the search for more effective treatments and cures for the most serious diseases that Americans face. Without immediate action, the harmful consequences of this outrageous purge will be with us for decades to come as the fired employees are forced to find new careers outside of their chosen field: medical research for the public good. Patients suffering from conditions including pediatric cancer, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), heart disease, and cystic fibrosis will bear the consequences of your actions. For the sake of all current and future patients who are depending on these new cures and treatments, we urge you to immediately reverse course and reinstate HHS's probationary employees.

We have heard from our constituents about the already devastating effects of these cuts. To name some examples: there is a researcher who, until you fired her solely because of her probationary status, was advancing research at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on an aggressive form of cancer. This individual had strong performance reviews and was gratified to be working in what she called her "dream job." She brought a unique skillset to her research group, and it is unclear how their vital work will continue in her absence.

There is an engineer who, until you fired him solely because of his probationary status, was conducting critical reviews at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to ensure that innovative new medical devices are safe and ready for patients to use. After years of study to complete his PhD, he was "honored to work in a space where he could protect patients." His job was funded by industry fees, not taxpayer dollars. He is now forced to find a new career path while his former teammates scramble to manage without him.

We have heard from patients and their loved ones who are heartbroken and angry that, under your leadership, the United States is deliberately giving up its role as the world's engine of medical innovation. We heard from a man who lost his beloved wife to ALS, leaving behind a young child. He wrote: "the one bright spot in this ordeal was the knowledge that scientists were working hard to figure out what causes ALS, and how to fight it." He is extremely concerned that research progress on ALS will be negatively affected by your personnel cuts.

Many of the individuals you fired are among the best and brightest young scientists of their generation and embarked on their careers at our storied federal research institutions in the last several years. Some were recently promoted to highly competitive permanent positions due to their strong performance and thus had probationary status. You are now actively pushing them out of public service to our nation. Furthermore, these firings are contributing to the overall environment of chaos and poor morale at HHS under the Trump administration, further damaging staff retention. In short, these losses to medical research will be felt for decades to come if you do not act quickly to change course.

Once again, we emphatically urge you to reinstate your fired probationary employees without delay and to cease your harassment of all the dedicated public servants at HHS.

Sincerely,



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Angela Alsobrooks
United States Senator



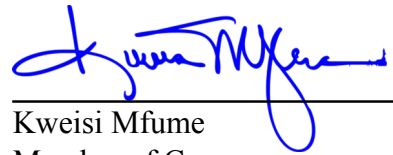
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



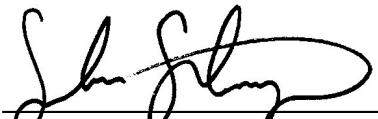
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



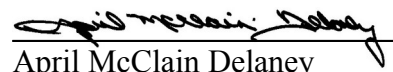
Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



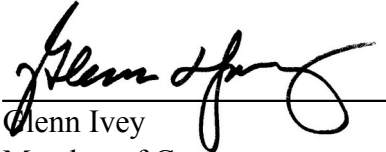
Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



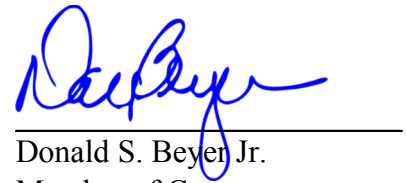
Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress