

119TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 389

Condemning the extreme anti-vaccine policies of Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., strongly opposing the policies of the State of Florida that roll back immunization requirements, and expressing the sense of the Senate that vaccines are critical to protecting public health, eliminating preventable illness and death, and reducing hospitalizations and severity of illness, work best when adopted at a high level within each community, and must be made available to the public.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

SEPTEMBER 16, 2025

Ms. ROSEN (for herself, Mr. SCHIFF, Mr. VAN HOLLEN, Mr. DURBIN, Ms. ALSOBROOKS, and Mr. REED) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

RESOLUTION

Condemning the extreme anti-vaccine policies of Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., strongly opposing the policies of the State of Florida that roll back immunization requirements, and expressing the sense of the Senate that vaccines are critical to protecting public health, eliminating preventable illness and death, and reducing hospitalizations and severity of illness, work best when adopted at a high level within each community, and must be made available to the public.

Whereas there is strong bipartisan support for wide access to vaccines, ensuring vaccines are affordable, trusting science and relying on peer-reviewed medical information, and protecting all individuals, especially children and vulnerable populations, from preventable illness;

Whereas it is dangerous and harmful to children's health to promote conspiracy theories and restrict access to life-saving preventive medicine, including vaccines;

Whereas having a high rate of community adoption of vaccines is critical to protect individuals who medically cannot receive certain vaccinations, including infants and individuals with weakened immune systems, such as cancer patients;

Whereas routine childhood immunizations for children born between 1994 and 2023 have prevented approximately 508,000,000 cases of illness, approximately 32,000,000 hospitalizations, and over 1,100,000 deaths, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention;

Whereas measles is a highly contagious and deadly disease with a range of serious health complications, and the measles, mumps, and rubella vaccine (MMR) is safe and effective in preventing this disease and has prevented over 60,000,000 deaths worldwide between 2000 and 2023;

Whereas COVID-19 has caused over 1,200,000 deaths in the United States and over 7,100,000 deaths worldwide, with fatalities dropping dramatically once the COVID-19 vaccine became widely available;

Whereas, after the hepatitis A vaccine was introduced in 1995, between 1996 and 2011, the rate of hepatitis A infection dropped by 95 percent;

Whereas, after the hepatitis B vaccine was introduced with implementation of the birth dose recommendation, there has been a 95 percent reduction in infant hepatitis B infections, and an estimated 90,100 deaths have been prevented;

Whereas polio was a major cause of significant disability and paralysis of children prior to the polio vaccine being released in 1955, with over 21,000 paralytic cases in 1952, and the disease was eradicated in the United States by 1979 due to effectiveness of the vaccine;

Whereas diphtheria, described in history dating back to the 5th century, is a contagious disease that causes respiratory illness, has a 30 percent fatality rate (with higher fatality rates for young children), and caused up to 15,000 deaths in the United States annually in the 1920s, but due to widespread vaccination, there has been only 1 reported death from diphtheria in the United States between 1996 and 2018;

Whereas smallpox is a deadly disease that has existed for over 3000 years, with a fatality rate around 30 percent, that was eradicated in the United States by 1949 and worldwide by 1977, due to the effectiveness of vaccines;

Whereas vaccines for seniors, including vaccines for influenza, COVID–19, and shingles, are a critical prevention tool to keep older individuals healthy and out of the hospital;

Whereas there are numerous additional diseases, including some cancers, that are preventable by vaccines;

Whereas vaccine research to discover new ways to prevent additional disease or treat disease should continue to receive Federal research funding with no political interference;

Whereas availability and insurance coverage of vaccines for the entire population through a wide range of medical and community settings, such as pharmacies, clinics, hospitals, physician offices, health departments, health centers, mobile clinics, and other locations, is essential to ensure access to vaccines and protect public health;

Whereas recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on vaccines are tied to, and impact, a wide array of health programs, including the Medicaid program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396 et seq.), the program under section 1928 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1396s; commonly referred to as the “Vaccines for Children program”) , the TRICARE program under chapter 55 of title 10, United States Code, hospital care and medical services furnished by the Department of Veterans Affairs under chapters 17 and 18 of title 38, United States Code, the Medicare program under title XIX of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 1395 et seq.), and private health insurance;

Whereas a lack of private or public insurance coverage for vaccines could make vaccines prohibitively expensive for millions of patients to access, forcing patients to forego vaccinations due to cost;

Whereas, in June 2025, Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. took the unprecedented step of dismissing all 17 members of the previously independent Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and appointed a new set of members;

Whereas such Advisory Committee has advised the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on vaccine recommendations for more than 60 years;

Whereas Secretary Kennedy's actions directly threatened access to the COVID-19 vaccine in several States, including Nevada, by making it more difficult for individuals who want the vaccine to get it; and

Whereas, in September 2025, the State of Florida became the first State in modern history to take steps to eliminate its immunization requirements for schoolchildren, putting Florida children at a higher risk of contracting preventable diseases like measles, pertussis, and other life-threatening diseases: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) supports public health decisions based on
3 science;

4 (2) agrees with the stance of the American
5 Academy of Pediatrics and other professional medical organizations in strongly recommending immunization as the safest and most cost-effective way of
6 preventing disease, disability, and death;

9 (3) condemns States taking steps to weaken
10 school immunization requirements, putting children
11 and vulnerable individuals at serious risk;

12 (4) strongly opposes the anti-vaccine policies
13 proposed by the State of Florida in September 2025;

14 (5) condemns the misguided policies of Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F.
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1 Kennedy, Jr. that are based on anti-vaccine con-
2 spiracy theories and have resulted in confusion, fear,
3 and lack of vaccine access for American families;

4 (6) opposes the politicization of the Advisory
5 Committee on Immunization Practices of the Cen-
6 ters for Disease Control and Prevention and calls for
7 a return to relying on unbiased and qualified med-
8 ical professionals;

9 (7) affirms that vaccines, including for COVID-
10 19, should remain accessible, including through in-
11 surance coverage, and that the government should
12 not mandate policies that make COVID-19 vaccines
13 unavailable for those who want them; and

14 (8) expresses the sense of the Senate that vac-
15 cines—

16 (A) are critical to protecting public health,
17 eliminating preventable illness and death, and
18 reducing hospitalization and severity of illness;

19 (B) work best when adopted at a high rate
20 within each community; and

21 (C) should remain easily accessible and af-
22 fordable, without restriction.

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