

**Remarks During a Swearing-in Ceremony for Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., as Secretary of Health and Human Services and an Exchange With Reporters**

*February 13, 2025*

*The President.* Good. Thank you very much. And thank you all for being here on this very exciting—this is a very exciting day for—we just had a big tariff meeting—reciprocal tariffs. Should have been done 40 years ago. It wasn't, but it is now. It was big moment, actually, and this is a tremendous moment right now.

And it's going to be a real honor for me to introduce Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., who'll take the oath of office and officially become our Secretary of Health and Human Services, just as I promised last year.

Bobby is going to lead a great national mission to make America healthy again, and he's going to do it. I think he's going to do things that will really make us very proud of this day.

Like his father, Senator Robert F. Kennedy, and his uncle, President John F. Kennedy, Bobby has devoted much of his life to serving his fellow Americans. In his campaign for President—and he was a very tough competitor. I did not like it at all. *[Laughter]* I said, "Let's get him on my side." *[Laughter]*

But in his campaign for President in 2024, Bobby brought together a coalition of supporters across party lines, and he really worked very hard, and he got—he had tremendous support, unbelievable support. And I think a lot of that support came my way when we decided to do a little merger.

And it was really great. And—it was very loyal—very loyal, incredible people. They believe in him so strongly because he's a fierce advocate for the health of our children and for the values of free speech, democracy, and peace.

And people are going to be very impressed. I have no doubt. I've known him a long time. He's been a friend of mine a long time.

Perhaps most importantly, though, Bobby created a nationwide movement made up of millions and millions of mothers and fathers and young people and concerned citizen of every background who want to end and—this—this horrible, chronic disease crisis that exists—exists in America.

He's absolutely committed to getting dangerous chemicals out of our environment and out of our food supply and getting the American people the facts and the answers that we deserve after years in which our public health system has squandered the trust of our citizens. And they really have. They didn't—they don't trust us. They don't trust anybody, frankly. They've gone through hell.

There's no better person to lead our campaign of historic reforms and restore faith in American health care, and Bobby is going to do it.

The United States spends more money in health than any other country on Earth, but we're growing sicker every year. We're not as healthy as countries that spend just a fraction of what we spend. So, there's something wrong. He's going to figure it out.

In recent decades, we've seen staggering increases in cancer rates across all age demographics, including more than 40 percent increase in childhood cancer since 1975—who can believe that? —and an explosion in other chronic childhood illnesses.

Not long ago, 1 in 10,000 people—children had autism. Now it's 1 in 36. Think of that, 1 in 10,000—1 in 10,000, and now it's 1 in 36. Who can believe that? There's something wrong. There's something wrong, and I think it's some—it's something that can be found out.

In 2022, more than 40 percent of children had at least one chronic health condition, and today, nearly 80 percent of young adults do not qualify for military service, in large part for health reasons. They're—think of that, 80 percent. Something is wrong, and that's why, immediately after Bobby is sworn in, I will be signing an Executive order establishing the President's commission to make America healthy again. We have some great people on that commission.

Chaired by our new Secretary, this groundbreaking—breaking commission will be charged with investigating what is causing the decades-long increase in chronic illness, reporting its findings, and delivering an action plan to the American people. And it's going to be a plan that people are really waiting to hear.

Bobby, I want to thank you. You've gone through a lot. It's taken great courage. You've been amazing, actually. I'd call him, I'd say, "You're going to be okay." And he said, "I know. I really do."

He's really been supported, amazingly, by Cheryl and his family. And it was a very tough—it was a very nasty group of people that were after him, but he was tougher, and he was smarter than they are, and that's why he's here today. There are very few people that could have withstood the—the assault, but he was able to.

So, I just want to congratulate you, and we have a very special person here to swear you in. A very—a man that I—I think has done just a—I think he's just a—an amazing man, as you know. His name happens to be Gorsuch, and he's a—a member of the Supreme Court in extremely good standing. He's highly respected by everybody. And I didn't know, are you two friends or something or did this just happen to be—Justice, did this just happen to be the luck of the draw? What happened?

*Secretary Kennedy.* I reached out to him.

*The President.* Did you reach out?

*Secretary Kennedy.* Yes.

*The President.* Well, you reached out to a very good man.

So, please, if you would. Thank you very much.

*White House Staff Secretary William O. Scharf.* Mr. President, you have to sign the commission first.

Sorry—sorry, Justice, we just need to——

*Supreme Court Associate Justice Neil M. Gorsuch.* Oh, this has to be done first.

*The President.* I'll do this first.

*Staff Secretary Scharf.* Sorry.

*The President.* We're going to make this a good one, right?

Okay. It's good so far, Bobby. Good.

[*At this point, the President signed the certificate.*]

It's a 10. [*Laughter*] [*Inaudible*]

[*The President, Justice Gorsuch, and Secretary Kennedy posed for a photograph with the signed certificate.*]

*Justice Gorsuch.* Let me get out of this one.

*Actor Cheryl Hines.* No, why am I in it? I'm not—[*laughter*]——

*Participant.* Go in there. Get the kids in there. Go in there.

*Ms. Hines.* And the—oh, I'm going to hold it. Okay, I'm holding it.

*The President.* Why don't you get in here?

*Justice Gorsuch.* Sure. All right.

*White House aide.* Over here, please.

[*The President, Justice Gorsuch, Secretary Kennedy, and the family of Secretary Kennedy posed for a photograph with the signed certificate.*]

*Justice Gorsuch.* Would all the family like to join?

*Participant.* Yes, sure.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Please place your left hand on the Bible and raise your right.

Repeat after me.

I, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

*Secretary Kennedy.* I, Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Do solemnly swear.

*Secretary Kennedy.* Do solemnly swear.

*Justice Gorsuch.* That I will support and defend.

*Secretary Kennedy.* That I will support and defend.

*Justice Gorsuch.* The Constitution of the United States.

*Secretary Kennedy.* The Constitution of the United States.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Against all enemies.

*Secretary Kennedy.* Against all enemies.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Foreign and domestic.

*Secretary Kennedy.* Foreign and domestic.

*Justice Gorsuch.* That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

*Secretary Kennedy.* That I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same.

*Justice Gorsuch.* That I take this obligation freely.

*Secretary Kennedy.* That I take this obligation freely.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Without—without any mental reservation.

*Secretary Kennedy.* Without any mental reservation.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Or purpose of evasion.

*Secretary Kennedy.* Or purpose of evasion.

*Justice Gorsuch.* And that I will well and faithfully discharge.

*Secretary Kennedy.* And that I will well and faithfully discharge.

*Justice Gorsuch.* The duties of the office.

*Secretary Kennedy.* The duties of the office.

*Justice Gorsuch.* On which I am about to enter.

*Secretary Kennedy.* On which I am about to enter.

*Justice Gorsuch.* So help me, God.

*Secretary Kennedy.* So help me, God.

*Justice Gorsuch.* Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.

*The President.* Bobby.

*Ms. Hines.* Oh, Bobby.

*Secretary Kennedy.* I—I want to begin by thanking President Trump for giving me this extraordinary opportunity, and I—I want to introduce my family and thank them for being here.

My wife, Cheryl; my cousin, Anthony Shriver; my daughter, Kick; my other daughter, Kyra; Carolina—Carolina Shriver; Joey Shriver; Jackson Hines; and Amaryllis Kennedy.

Oh, and I want to thank all of you so—for your support and throughout this whole 2½ year journey.

I—my first time in this Oval Office was in 1961, and I came here to meet my—or 1962. I came here, and I had a meeting with my uncle, who was President then, where we talked about the environment.

He was involved deeply, as we all know, in restoring physical fitness in this country. He challenged—at one point during his administration, he challenged Americans to do a 50-mile walk, which I ultimately did.

But I remember the day that my father completed his walk. We were staying at—at—up at Camp David. And my father came in after 18 hours walking on the C&O towpath with his feet bleeding and blisters on them.

My father had a—one of his best friends was Al Lowenstein. And Al Lowenstein—ultimately—he was a Congressman from New York who was assassinated himself in 1980. But Al Lowenstein had started the "Dump Johnson" movement to get rid of President Johnson and—end the Vietnam War. And at the time that he started it, people just thought it was a fool's errand.

And ultimately, he asked my father to run for President against Johnson. My father wouldn't do it at that time, and he asked Gene McCarthy. McCarthy did it, and he joined that campaign.

And my father ultimately ran, and Johnson then dropped out. So, Al Lowenstein had succeeded.

And although Al Lowenstein was on the other side now running against my father with Gene McCarthy, my father wrote him a note—a quote from Emerson—where he said, "If a single man plants himself firmly on his own ideal, and there abide, the whole wide world will come around to him."

For 20 years, I've gotten up every morning on my knees and prayed that God would put me in a position where I can end the childhood chronic disease epidemic in this country.

On August 23rd of last year, God sent me President Trump, and he gave me—he's now given me—he's kept every promise that he's made to me. He's kept his word in every account and gone way beyond it.

I'm so grateful to you, Mr. President. A lot of people told me that I couldn't trust President Trump, that I better get it in writing. And we did a handshake, and everything that he told me he was going to do, he has done. And I'm so grateful to him.

And I've told you before, I genuinely believe that you are a pivotal historical figure, and you are going to transform this country at a time when we see all of the indicia of democracy now in tatters in our country. We see the rise of the military-industrial complex, the rise of totalitarianism, these attacks on our Constitution, and this breathtaking epidemic that is disabling our people.

President Trump has promised to restore the American dream in this country. A healthy person has a thousand dreams. A sick person only has one. Sixty percent of our population has only one dream: that they get better.

President Trump has promised that he's going to restore America's strength. But we can't be a strong nation if we have a weak citizenry. If people are sick—60 percent of our—our people are sick. Seventy-seven percent, as President Trump mentioned, of our children cannot qualify for military service.

And—we need a man on a white horse now. We need somebody who—who is willing to come in and has the spine and the guts and the strength to challenge orthodoxies, to stand in the way of vested interests, and to break institutions that have turned against our democracy. President Trump has shown again and again that he is that hero.

And most recently, I—greatly appreciate, and I called you the day that you announced the termination of USAID. My uncle started USAID in 1961 for humanitarian purposes, to put our country on the side of the poor. It has been captured by the military-industrial complex. It has become a sinister propagator of totalitarianism across—and war across the globe, and very few people understand how sinister this agency really is. And President Trump saw that, and he stood up to it with a master stroke.

And we want to do the same thing with the institutions that are stealing the health of our children. We need a revolutionary figure, and you are that figure. And I'm very grateful for you for giving me this opportunity.

*The President.* Thank you, Bobby.

*Secretary Kennedy.* I want to—I just—I want to recognize some of the—the allies that I've had in this battle for a long time: —Senator Rand Paul; Senator Ron Johnson; Senator Roger Marshall; Marjorie Taylor Greene; and—and Buddy Carter, who have all been champions of the MAHA agenda before I even came along. I'm very grateful for you for standing strong.

Thank you very much, President Trump.

*Department of Health and Human Services*

*Q.* Mr. Secretary, if I could ask, what plans do you have immediately at HHS now that you're sworn in, sir?

*The President.* He's going to be running it. He's going to do a great job. That's my plan.

*Q.* What would you like to see him to do first, Mr. President?

*The President.* Well, he's going to find out a lot of secrets that have been maybe kept from us, but he's going to come up with some solutions to some big, big problems—solve problems.

And I think he's going to go down in the record books. I really have confidence. This group has great—even Rand has confidence, and that's—[laughter]—that doesn't happen often.

[Inaudible]—good luck. Good luck.

*Q.* If I could ask you, Mr. Secretary, do you plan to fire anyone immediately? Or what are your plans on day one, which I guess is today?

*Secretary Kennedy.* Our plans are radical transparency and returning gold-standard science to NIH, to the FDA, and CDC—to end—ending the corruption, ending the corporate capture of those agencies, getting rid of the people on those panels that have conflicts of interest. We can do unadorned and unimpeded science, rather than the kind of product that is coming out of those agencies today.

*Q.* Mr. Secretary, may I ask, how do you address concerns that some Americans may have about your stance on vaccines?

*Secretary Kennedy.* If—when people actually hear what I think about vaccines, which is common sense—which is vaccines should be tested, they should be safe, everybody should have informed consent—people—people are reacting because they hear things about me that aren't true. They hear characterizations of things that I've said that are simply not true.

When they hear what I have to say, actually, about vaccines, everybody supports it.

*Q.* Mr. Kennedy, Cara Castronuova from Lindell TV. What's your message to Democrats in the Senate that fought so hard to keep you from taking this position? And congratulations, by the way.

*Secretary Kennedy.* President Trump has promised to be the President for all Americans, and he has said to me that he understands that there's no such thing as Republican children or Democratic children. All of our children need to be protected. And whether you're in a blue State or red State, I'm going to do everything I can to work with you, whether you're a Democrat or Republican, to restore child's health in this country.

*Q.* Mr. Secretary—

*The President.* Great job. Great job.

Thank you all very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Secretary Kennedy referred to Reps. Marjorie Taylor Green and Earl L. "Buddy" Carter. The transcript was released by the Office of Communications on February 14.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Secretary of Health and Human Services Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., swearing-in ceremony.

*Locations:* Washington, DC.

*Names:* Gorsuch, Neil M.; Hines, Cheryl; Kennedy, Robert F., Jr.

*Subjects:* Cancer research, prevention, and treatment; Health outcomes, improvement efforts; Make America Healthy Again Commission; Medical research and development; Secretary of Health and Human Services; Supreme Court Associate Justice; U.S. tariffs on imports, adjustment.

*DCPD Number:* DCPD202500261.