

Episode 57DHWV June 20 2025 A new external committee to set vaccine policy meets June 25 2025

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1 **RAWSEP View** Vaccine skepticism from Kennedy Junior leaves doubt about updates to the COVID vaccine Coal mining still causes black lung Trump orders Michigan Coal plants to stay open

2 Four ways to anticipate the external committee that sets vaccine policy in the U S the ACIP at the meeting next week June 25 to 26 2025 Four ways to anticipate the ACIP which is meeting next week **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization** Your Local Epidemiologist June 20 2025 A big vaccine policy meeting What to expect pre bunking and some answers to your questions Next week June 25 to 26 2025 ACIP the external committee that sets vaccine policy in the U S meets Normally these meetings barely make headlines They happen three times a year and are usually a routine part of the bureaucratic process determining who gets vaccines and how they are made available But these are not normal times This will be the first meeting since RFK Junior dismantled the previous committee of 17 and replaced them with eight handpicked members ranging from anti vaccine activists to Covid 19 contrarians for example conspiracy theorists are spreading the misinformation that they think mRNA kills and conspiracists think masks are child abuse to some with genuine expertise At this meeting they will discuss fall vaccines for Covid flu and RSV vote on a handful of new policies and review routine vaccinations What they say or decide could ripple across insurance coverage government vaccine programs which serve nearly half of U S kids school entry requirements and create widespread confusion Here are four things to anticipate the new members topics I expect to bubble up on social media some answered and unanswered questions and some hope **1 Time to meet the members** When these new members were appointed RFK Junior framed it as restoring trust bringing in experts and following gold standard science He pointed to credentials like MDs and PhDs Those of us raising concerns about this new committee also talk about trust expertise and science but we are using those words to sound the alarm One of the most disorienting parts of this moment is that it is turned into a game of he said she said My advice do not focus on the words alone but on the actions behind them Trust is not declared it is earned and demonstrated consistently Research shows trustworthiness rests on three pillars Credibility Do they bring real expertise? Believability Are they transparent and genuine? Relatability Do they reflect and understand the communities they serve? Through this lens RFK Junior new ACIP falls short even before it enters the meeting This is important to understand intent Credibility Several new members have little or no vaccine experience Peer reviewed publications are not a perfect measure but they are a useful proxy and this group severely lacks vaccine training

compared to the last committee This seems important if they are making vaccine decisions for 330 million Americans Just last week one new ACIP member Robert Malone proudly declared himself anti vaxx When someone says this believe it As you may recall he recently blamed a death of a child on medical errors not measles a textbook disinformation tactic to deflect from the preventability of the disease of measles Believability RFK Junior has already inaccurately stated basic facts about his appointees claiming one has an MD he does not and another holds an academic position he left eight years ago Many have conflicts of interest from profiting off litigation to building media empires rooted in sowing doubt One appointee disclosed more conflicts during prior service than all 17 former members combined The new committee has not disclosed any of this Relatability This is where this group gains traction They tap into genuine frustrations with a broken health ecosystem anger over pandemic policies and distrust of institutions but channel that into dangerous falsehoods During the meeting CDC scientists will present data But then the new members will debate ask questions and in some cases vote directly shaping U S vaccine policy

2 Expect confusion fueled by falsehoods The newly posted ACIP agenda includes typical topics like flu and Covid 19 vaccines but two last minute items were added that raised red flags to me Thimerosal containing flu vaccines Vaccination in kids under 5 These topics have long been cornerstones of vaccine falsehoods among vaccine skeptics Next week I expect the new members or their associated organizations like the Health Defense of Children to amplify them during the meeting or on social media Here is some quick context to help you navigate the noise Thimerosal in flu vaccines Thimerosal an ethyl mercury based preservative that keeps vaccines safe from bacterial contamination was largely removed in 1999 as a precaution even though no harm was ever demonstrated At the time there was not data specifically on the toxicity of ethylmercury as opposed to methylmercury so safety assessments were conservatively applied Using those stricter benchmarks cumulative exposure from the full childhood schedule slightly exceeded what was considered safe for prenatal methylmercury exposure Since then countless studies have shown ethylmercury is processed differently and is safe at the levels used in vaccines For now the CDC website does a fantastic job of explaining the nuances I will keep a close eye on this if it changes M vaccine I do not know what they will go after here Maybe febrile seizures which are a very small risk after vaccination 1 in 3000 and do not compare to the risk of infection or baseline risk in the general population 2 point 5% False claims linking M to autism may also resurface I would also brace for rumors on RSV vaccination during pregnancy and Covid 19 RSV vaccines and preterm birth After the RSV vaccine was approved for pregnant women extra scientific scrutiny rightfully so was applied because of a slight non significant signal for preterm births in one clinical trial site in South Africa However thereafter a number of studies including a U S study from nearly 3000 deliveries in 2023 to 2024 showed no increased risk 5 point 9% of vaccinated pregnancies resulted in preterm births versus 6 point 7% among unvaccinated The RSV vaccine is far safer than the disease itself Covid 19 mRNA vaccines and death There are rare vaccine tragedies that need to be taken seriously but they certainly are not common occurrences And do not forget that Covid 19 vaccines saved millions of lives across the globe and will continue to do so Go here for a Your Local Epidemiologist YLE deep dive on this topic

3 We will have some answers but not all Do not expect full clarity next week The entire process has been flipped on its head We do not know what checks and balances remain within the federal government how insurers or state regulators will respond or what will happen next For example the vote on the Covid 19 vaccine was quietly pulled from the agenda of the meeting next week which means

we may not have an official recommendation. What this could mean to you in the fall remains to be seen. Also the vote to strengthen HPV vaccine recommendations for a vaccine that has the potential to eliminate several types of cancer was pulled from the agenda. As This may be one of the first vaccines targeted by the new ACIP given the track record of some members of casting doubt on it. Its future is uncertain but no changes will happen next week. Here are a few answers I can offer now. Who will step in if the government is out? Nothing can replace the U S government but the Vaccine Integrity Project an outside group created in anticipation of the RFK Junior move will meet this summer to discuss fall vaccines. Professional organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics, American Medical Association and American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists will continue making evidence based recommendations. Ideally these groups will coordinate to minimize public confusion. Will my insurance cover a vaccine my doctor orders if it is not ACIP recommended? Insurers are not necessarily bound to ACIP. They would likely make decisions based on costs and preventing illness is far cheaper than treating it. For example it is far cheaper to cover a Covid 19 vaccine during pregnancy than a NICU stay. Would it be possible to get vaccines in Canada if necessary? Yes. What vaccines could be taken off the market at this meeting? ACIP will vote on recommendations for RSV and flu vaccines including those with thimerosal. Votes on other routine vaccinations like M polio HPV and Hep B are not on the docket. Would removing thimerosal containing flu vaccines cause a shortage? I would expect this ACIP group to recommend removing them. The good news is that this only accounts for a small percentage of flu doses in the U S 5 to 7% so we will not run out of supply. The greater harm would be to public confidence particularly globally where many are still used. **4 Expect lots of people stepping up. Many organizations and the hundreds of thousands of clinicians and scientists they represent have already strongly opposed these developments.** In addition the American Medical Association called for a Senate investigation and the American Academy of Pediatrics is ramping up a strong social media presence. In addition while much of this feels uncertain many are already mobilizing behind the scenes. Professional societies are coordinating. Public health leaders are meeting with insurers. State health officials are preparing. Health communicators are ready to counter falsehoods online. You may not see most of this work but it is happening. The vast majority of clinicians and public health workers nationwide care deeply about your ability to access vaccines protect your family and make informed decisions. They are still fighting for you. I hope this provides hope. Bottom line I would say grab your popcorn. If this meeting did not have such serious implications for your health or the health of your family or the health of your patients. There are more unknowns than answers and the next few weeks may get even more confusing. However many in public health are already hard at work ensuring you have access to evidence informed information and care. I will be back with ACIP Cliff Notes next week. Love Your Local Epidemiologist YLE

3A Headlines The New York Times June 20 2025 Air Pollution Mitigation Hybrid Cars Once Derided and Dismissed Have Become Popular The New York Times Economics Who is More Likely to Do It Yourself D I Y The New York Times Health and Medicine Boy 15 Survives Lightning Strike in Central Park Police Say The New York Times Health and Medicine Chicken Alfredo Recall 3 Dead in Outbreak Tied to Walmart Kroger The New York Times Nature Summer Solstice 2025 Why It is the Longest Day of the Year The New York Times Trump Actions Juneteenth Goes Uncelebrated at White House as Trump Complains About Too Many Holidays The New York Times Trump Actions Opinion Gratitude Not Envy Can Save America The New York Times Trump Actions Science and Medicine Opinion

Holy Water Could not Save My Husband MAHA Would not Either The New York Times Trump Actions Opinion We Cannot Allow Political Violence to Become Normal The New York Times Trump Budget Cuts to fund Tax Breaks for the Rich Opinion The Trump Beautiful Bill Actually Pushes Manufacturing Abroad The New York Times Trump Budget Cuts to fund Tax Breaks for the Rich Seeking Jobs and Purpose Fired Federal Workers Form New Networks The New York Times Trump Budget Cuts to fund Tax Breaks for the Rich Tuition Increases and Layoffs Are Coming to a Broad Set of Universities The New York Times Trump Tariffs The Markets Are Balancing on a the edge of a Knife The New York Times [3B Headlines The New York Times June 19 2025](#) [4 Air Pollution Medicine and Science How Black Lung Came Roaring Back to Coal Country The New York Times](#) [5 Air Pollution Trump Tariffs Why Higher Oil Prices May Not Change U S Energy Policy The New York Times](#) Economics Opinion The Things College Students Leave Behind The New York Times Texas Might Ban Hemp The New York Times Trump Actions Opinion NATO Is Doing Just Fine Thank You The New York Times Trump Budget Cuts to fund Tax Breaks for the Rich Little Lobbyists Urge Senators to Oppose The Trump Bill Cutting Medicaid The New York Times Trump Budget Cuts to fund Tax Breaks for the Rich Record Debt Limit Increase Would Break Republican Precedent The New York Times Trump Budget Cuts to fund Tax Breaks for the Rich The Senate Wants Billions More in Medicaid Cuts Pinching States and Infuriating Hospitals The New York Times Trump Tariffs The Interest Rate Approach of the Fed Keeps it on a Collision Course With Trump The New York Times Trump Tariffs How The Trump Metals Tariffs Could Make Food and Beer Cans More Expensive The New York Times [3C Headlines The Guardian June 20 2025](#) [6 Air Pollution California Fossil Fuel Companies win in Court Fuel firms can challenge emission limits of California the supreme court rules California The Guardian](#) [7 Air Pollution Trump Actions White House moves to keep costly dirty unneeded Michigan coal plants open Michigan The Guardian](#) [8 Trump Actions Medicine and Science Pandemic preparedness dramatically eroding under Trump experts say US news The Guardian](#) Trump Actions Trump fails to mark Juneteenth federal holiday celebrating end of US slavery Trump The Guardian Ukraine The first rule is to forget your past life Ukrainian marine tells of his three years of torment in Russian captivity Ukraine The Guardian Ukraine war briefing Russia on verge of recession Putin minister tells economic showcase Ukraine The Guardian [Headlines Other Media June 19 2025](#) [9 Assassination of Democrat Minnesota State Senator Melissa Hortman and her husband Minnesota Governor Tim Walz Minnesota U S Senator Amy Klobuchar Minnesota U S Senator Tina Smith California Governor Gavin Newsom Political violence thrusts potential 2028 candidates onto the national stage](#)

[4](#) How Black Lung Came Roaring Back to Coal Country The disease of old men was once nearly eradicated Black Lung is back and suffocating younger miners Federal cuts risk putting a solution further out of reach [Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization](#) The New York Times June 19 2025 In Harlan County Kentucky some two family members followed a long family tradition when they became Appalachian coal miners For it they both now have the pneumoconiosis of coal miners a debilitating disease characterized by masses and scarred tissue in the chest and better known by its colloquial name black lung The father aged 73 was not all that surprised when he was diagnosed in his mid 60s In coal mining communities black lung has long been considered a disease of old men one to be almost expected after enough years underground But his son was diagnosed much younger at just 41 years old Like his father he has progressive massive fibrosis the most severe form of the disease

And today at 48 he is even sicker. When he followed his father into mining he thought he was entering a safer industry than the one prior generations had worked in. By the 1990s safety standards and miner protections had nearly consigned the disease to history. But now black lung is back. One in five working miners in Central Appalachia now has it and some are just in their 40s. Modern miners are contracting it at younger ages and at rates not seen since the 1970s. For 20th century miners it could take decades to develop severe black lung. For men of the generation of the son just a few years can be enough. Nationwide one in 10 working miners is now estimated to have black lung. In the heart of the central Appalachian coal fields it is one in five. Often their disease is more severe the progression faster. Doctors are seeing larger masses and more scarring in the lungs. Transplants disability claims and deaths are all on the rise. In an old industry the reasons are modern. Centuries of extraction have altered the landscape making the mountains more dangerous to mine researchers say and the men beneath them vulnerable not just to black lung but to another lung disease called silicosis. Even if every coal operation in central Appalachia closed tomorrow a doctor said miners who have taken in enough of the toxic mix of silica and coal dust would need decades of care. Then they will die he said and we will have a lot more widows and children and grandchildren whose fathers were taken much earlier than they should have been. One of those widows is likely to be the 67 year old wife and mother in the Harlan County Kentucky family. A daughter of coal miners she can now only watch as the health of both her husband and her son deteriorates. The breaks in the garden are longer now. On cold days the men can barely step outside without their lungs burning. It is hard to watch the wife and mother said. It takes a lot of prayer to get through this.

5 Why Higher Oil Prices May Not Change U S Energy Policy. The energy crisis of the 1970s suggests that higher oil prices are unlikely to significantly shift U S energy policy away from fossil fuels. **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization**. The New York Times. June 19 2025.

As military actions between Iran and Israel continued two tankers collided on Tuesday caught fire and spilled oil in the Gulf of Oman. The incident briefly sent shock waves through the oil market as investors contemplated a closure of the Strait of Hormuz. One estimate found that a closure in the crucial shipping route could result in oil prices soaring to \$120 a barrel. So would higher oil prices push more people or governments to move away from fossil fuels? Short term spikes in oil prices might translate into temporary changes in consumption patterns analysts have said. But they are not likely to have a significant impact on long term oil production or consumer habits. Oil shocks often accompanied by increases in gasoline prices have bedeviled presidents since the Nixon era. But while no one likes paying more for gasoline big price spikes have not translated into sweeping long term changes to domestic energy policy in the United States. An author pointed to two lessons from the energy crisis of the 1970s. Energy crises and policy change. The first lesson from the energy crisis Jacobs said is that even though it worried voters it did not lead to the development of a more robust domestic energy policy in the United States. In the 1970s after supply shocks led to high gas prices long lines at the pump and even rationing in some states many politicians agreed that the United States should reduce its dependence on foreign oil. Then President Jimmy Carter flirted with fixes like supporting renewables as he encouraged consumers to conserve energy. But big promises to fix the energy crisis fell flat. The lesson of the 1970s was that if Watergate and Vietnam taught Americans that governments lie then the failure to solve the energy crisis taught them that government was ineffective. Instead of reducing reliance on foreign oil by rethinking domestic energy policy Jacobs said the United States under President Ronald

Reagan stepped up its military presence in the Middle East Congress is currently debating the rollback of many of the renewable energy tax credits in the Inflation Reduction Act President Biden signature climate law The fate of this policy may prove far more consequential for the energy transition than an oil supply disruption in the Middle East Voters and higher prices The second lesson Jacobs said is that sacrifice is not popular In 1979 Carter angered voters when he made a speech suggesting people should use less energy He lost his bid for re election Americans would not tolerate increases at the pump Jacobs said They were not willing to make short term sacrifices for long term gains Biden and Trump both came of age during the energy crisis Jacobs pointed out And both have prioritized low costs for consumers with their energy agendas During his term Biden decided against proposing a carbon tax in favor of the tax breaks featured in the Inflation Reduction Act I R A and Trump promised to slash energy prices on the campaign trail So what is the long term prognosis for the energy mix of America? As domestic policies come and go the last decade or so has seen a crucial shift in energy economics Even if clean energy subsidies go away solar and wind have gotten so cheap that those industries are now here to stay Jacobs said And domestic politics aside oil may be fading in importance albeit slowly A Tuesday report from the International Energy Agency found that despite geopolitical uncertainties oil demand is projected to plateau by 2030

6 California Fossil Fuel firms can challenge the emission limits of California the Supreme Court rules Court votes to back challenge to state waiver that allows it to set tougher car emission standards than federal limits Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization The Guardian June 20 2025 Fossil fuel companies are able to challenge the ability of California to set stricter standards reducing the amount of polluting coming from cars the US supreme court has ruled in a case that is set to unravel one of the key tools used to curb planet heating emissions in recent years The conservative dominated supreme court voted by seven to two to back a challenge by oil and gas companies along with 17 Republican led states to a waiver that California has received periodically from the federal government since 1967 that allows it to set tougher standards than national rules limiting pollution from cars The state has separately stipulated that only zero emission cars will be able to sold there by 2035 Although states are typically not allowed to set their own standards aside from the federal Clean Air Act California has been given unique authority to do so via a waiver that has seen it become a pioneer in pushing for cleaner cars Other states are allowed to copy the stricter standard of California too But oil and gas companies as well as Republican politicians have complained about the waiver arguing that it caused financial harm The waiver was removed during the Trump first term but then reinstated by the Biden administration Trump is again looking into whether to revoke the waiver The ruling by the justices overturned a decision by the lower court to dismiss the lawsuit by a Valero Energy subsidiary and fuel industry groups The lower court had concluded that the plaintiffs lacked the required legal standing to challenge a 2022 EPA decision to let California set its own regulations The government generally may not target a business or industry through stringent and allegedly unlawful regulation and then evade the resulting lawsuits by claiming that the targets of its regulation should be locked out of court as unaffected bystanders conservative Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote for the majority Liberal Justices Sonia Sotomayor and Ketanji Brown Jackson dissented from the decision The lower court had previously ruled that the oil and gas industry did not have legal standing to attempt to topple the California waiver but a challenge to this reached the supreme court which appeared sympathetic to the claim when the case was heard in April It is not that high a burden Amy

Coney Barrett one of the justices said about proof of the alleged harm California and the federal government have been allowed to stretch and abuse the Clean Air Act the American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers one of the groups challenging the waiver has complained But environmentalists and the Democratic leadership of California have defended the waiver arguing that it has helped push forward vehicle innovation and help cut greenhouse gases Transportation is responsible for more planet heating pollution in the US than any other sector California and other clean car states cannot achieve federal clean air standards and protect communities without reducing harmful transportation pollution said the senior attorney at the Sierra Club We stand with these states to defend their well established authority to set standards for clean cars Michigan White House moves to keep costly dirty unneeded Michigan coal plants open One plant produces more arsenic pollution than any other in US and the other has been slated for closure since 2021 Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization The Guardian June 20 2025 The Trump administration is moving to keep open two Michigan coal plants that emit about 45% of the greenhouse gas pollution in Michigan which opponents say is an indication of how the US president plans to wield his controversial national energy emergency executive order Already the US Department of Energy DoE has ordered the JH Campbell coal plant on Lake Michigan to remain open beyond its 31 May closure date while the administration is expected to prolong the life of the Monroe power plant on Lake Erie currently scheduled to begin closing in 2028 Opponents say the order has little support in Michigan could cost ratepayers hundreds of millions of dollars and is ideologically driven The utilities of Michigan have said they did not ask for the plants to stay online and the Trump administration did not communicate with stakeholders before the order a spokesperson for the Michigan public service commission MPSC which regulates utilities and manages the Michigan grid said Trump promised riches from liquid gold in the US Now fossil fuel donors are benefiting The unnecessary recent order will increase the cost of power for homes and businesses in Michigan and across the Midwest the chair of the MPSC said in a statement We currently produce more energy in Michigan than needed As a result there is no existing energy emergency in either Michigan or the regional US grid The massive and ageing facilities also release high levels of carbon dioxide sulfur dioxide and particulate matter into the air Meanwhile their coal ash ponds leach arsenic lead lithium radium and sulfate into local drinking water and the Great Lakes The Monroe power plant is responsible for more arsenic water pollution than any other power plant in the US The Department of Energy DoE in a statement said the plan was about grid reliability That could set the stage for a lawsuit from Dana Nessel the Michigan attorney general who said in May she may sue over the order to keep the Campbell plant open and labeled the Trump energy emergency fabricated The Campbell plant will initially remain open for 90 days but the order is expected to be renewed said the senior energy organizer with the Sierra Club Michigan Climate law in Michigan requires 100% clean energy for utilities by 2040 Consumers Energy which owns the Campbell plant has since 2021 been planning for the closure of the plant as required by the Michigan energy plan The company said the closure of the Campbell plant would save ratepayers about 600 million dollars by 2040 The plant largely shut down for several days before reopening at the end of May Many of the employees had already found other jobs and purchasing coal on the spot is far more expensive than purchasing it months ahead of time as is standard The Trump order is costly and disruptive and makes no sense for Consumers Energy or its customers This is going to cost the ratepayers a lot of money The plans of Trump are also

at odds with market forces opponents say **Gas and renewables are generally cheaper and cause less pollution** Moreover the utilities of America are planning to reduce coal generation by more than 8GW by the end of the year according to the US Energy Information Administration It appeared to be an **ideological move with no basis in the needs of residents or the energy market** This is part of their goal to get rid of renewables and bring back fossil fuels **8** Pandemic preparedness dramatically eroding under Trump experts say With misinformation and murky details on bird flu and measles outbreaks experts worry about the next pandemic **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization**

The Guardian June 20 2025 Amid controversial dismissals for independent advisers and staff at health agencies alongside lackluster responses to the bird flu and measles outbreaks experts fear the US is now in worse shape to respond to a pandemic than before 2020 H5N1 which has received less attention under Trump than from the Biden team is not the only influenza virus or even the only variant of bird flu with the potential to spark a pandemic But a subpar response to the ongoing US outbreak signals a larger issue America is not ready for whatever pathogen will sweep through next Bird flu reinfections at US poultry farms highlight need for vaccines I am concerned on a number of fronts said a professor of epidemiology and director of the Pandemic Center at Brown University School of Public Health Those concerns include a lack of quality information from officials weakened virus monitoring systems and public health reductions at the federal state and local levels In the ongoing outbreaks of measles for example Robert F Kennedy Junior the secretary of health and human services has downplayed the severity of the disease spread misinformation about the highly effective vaccine to prevent measles and pushed unproven treatments The communications on measles gives me deep worries about what would happen in a pandemic The H5N1 outbreak has been plagued by incomplete information In Arizona 6 million chickens were killed or culled at a Family Farms of Hickman location because of H5N1 in May That is about 95% of the hen population of the company in the state Hundreds of workers including inmate laborers are now being dismissed as Arizona braces for egg shortages We are not testing it is not that there are no new cases Yet even as H5N1 outbreaks continue to spread on farms and wreak havoc on the food supply no new bird flu cases have been reported in people for months I am concerned that we may not be finding new infections in humans and a lack of testing may be the culprit The last bird flu case in a person was listed by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention CDC on February 23 2025 At that point at least 830 people in the US had been tested after contact with sick animals This kind of testing monitoring the health of people who regularly work with H5N1 infected animals is how the vast majority of cases 64 out of 70 have been found in this outbreak But then several CDC officials overseeing the bird flu response were fired on April 1 2025 Since then only about 50 people in the US have been tested after exposure to sick animals and no positive cases have been announced The next pandemic could be starting and we just do not know where that is happening and we do not have any ability to find out We are seeing health departments scrambling That infrastructure is just dramatically eroding Huge reductions in the public health workforce and resources has led to less monitoring of outbreaks known as disease surveillance Cutting back on that surveillance is leaving us more in the dark The CDC clawed back 11 point 4 billion dollars in Covid funding in March This funding was used to monitor test vaccinate and otherwise respond to public health issues at the state local territorial and tribal level International monitoring programs to address outbreaks before they expand across borders have also been cancelled Even stockpiled vaccines and

other protective measures like personal protective equipment take time to distribute. And flu is a fast moving disease that could cause a lot of damage in the months it would take to mount a vaccination campaign. The US government cancellation of its 766 million dollar contract with Moderna to research and develop an H5N1 vaccine also signals a concerning strategy from health officials. Other restrictions on vaccine development like a new plan to test all vaccines against saline placebos is going to make it extremely difficult to approve any new vaccine and would have a devastating impact on our ability to respond to a potential pandemic especially in a rapidly moving pandemic where speed matters. You do not have time for that if this virus causes a human to human outbreak. All of these policies mean the US is less prepared for a pandemic than it was in 2020. And it also means there will be preventable suffering now even before the next big one strikes. We are actively making people less safe less healthy and more dead.

9 Political violence thrusts potential 2028 candidates onto the national stage. More than a half dozen potential 2028 contenders have personally experienced political violence or had to manage the response to such incidents. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP for brevity and clarity and relationship to Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501c3 nonprofit organization

NBC News June 17 2025 The pace of political violence has so quickly accelerated in the United States that the country is poised to field a widening group of 2028 contenders who have experienced it in some form. To date at least a half dozen public officials who may run for president in 2028 have either personally faced political violence lost friends in such plots or had to manage political unrest in their states. Foisted onto the national stage by these incidents these politicians have given the public a glimpse of how they conduct themselves in a crisis including their ability to combat false messaging that often proliferates over social media and whether they have the capability to lead without being dragged into petty political skirmishes. The assassination over the weekend of Melissa Hortman the Democratic leader of the Minnesota state House and her husband was the latest episode of violence that captured national attention. Another Democratic state legislator and his wife were also shot multiple times and are recovering. It thrust Governor Tim Walz the 2024 Democratic vice presidential nominee and potential 2028 White House hopeful into the national spotlight where he directed the messaging behind a major investigation and manhunt while confronting his own grief at losing the dearest of friends. The Minnesota tragedy came as California Governor Gavin Newsom was locked in a cross country confrontation with the White House over its use of federal law enforcement amid protests over immigration arrests in the state. Just two months ago in Pennsylvania an attacker firebombed the residence of Governor Josh Shapiro because of his position on the Israeli Palestinian conflict. Shapiro had already dealt with the fallout from political violence after his state handled the attempted assassination of Trump in Butler last July the shooter also killed a MAGA Republican man at the Trump campaign rally that day. And in 2020 Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer another Democrat on the shortlist of 2028 contenders was the subject of a kidnapping plot. Other Democrats have had to deal with losing a close friend or colleague to the violence. Senator Amy Klobuchar Democrat of Minnesota who ran in 2020 and may also be a 2028 hopeful told Meet the Press on NBC on Sunday that she had dined with Hortman just hours before the assassination. Senator Amy Klobuchar remembers slain Minnesota State Representative Melissa Hortman. Illinois Governor JB Pritzker also had an interaction with Hortman on Friday the night he delivered an address at the annual dinner of the Minnesota Democratic Party. On Monday Pritzker was updating local news media of what he said was a hodgepodge of lists that included 600 names of officials found among the belongings of Vince Boelter the

man charged in the killing of Hortman and her husband Pritzker said he was not among those on any target list Stephanie Grisham a former Trump press secretary who resigned after the January 6 2021 attacks on the U S Capitol who endorsed then Vice President Kamala Harris last year added of Walz His message was absolutely spot on It was we should be able to have a conversation with our neighbors She said the repudiation of such acts should be loud and it should be Republicans and Democrats who cannot stand each other standing side by side to say Yes we disagree vehemently but that does not give anyone the right to hurt a human being Pete Giangreco a Democratic strategist who advised Klobuchar in her 2020 presidential campaign pointed to the No Kings protests on Saturday across the country as a model for constructive dissent It is a call to get back to a place where we could have our differences but do it in a civil way in elections that are free and open for everybody who is a citizen he said of the protests that drew hundreds of thousands but remained peaceful I think the more partisan Democrats get about the messaging as it relates to the political violence the less helpful it is both to the country as a whole but also to the prospects of winning in 2028 Giangreco said For Newsom the message he sent to his constituents was to demonstrate peacefully And to the wider national audience both the governor and his office deluged information spaces either to correct false narratives or combat negative messaging coming from the White House It is really tragic to be in a situation where it is the right thing to do in these situations to basically make sure that Republicans are not able to step in there and set a false narrative said Pat Dennis president of American Bridge 21st Century a pro Democratic group He said one of the more dangerous contributions to an era of political violence in recent years came in January when Trump pardoned or offered commutations to those involved in the Capitol attack That included individuals convicted and some who even pleaded guilty to attacking law enforcement officers These groups have a sense that they are effectively above the law because the president will pardon them for their crimes Dennis said And I believe that is done as an intimidation technique Trump likewise recently brought up the prospect of pardoning those convicted in the plot targeting Whitmer saying he would take a look at pardoning the men involved and said the trial looked to me like somewhat of a railroad job Whitmer said she was disappointed with the Trump remarks Prosecutors said that two men convicted in the kidnapping scheme wanted to grab Whitmer and hang her Do not forget the most important thing these defendants were outside the house of a woman Governor Gretchen Whitmer in the middle of the night with night vision goggles and guns and a plan to kidnap her And they made a bomb That is real enough is not it? a federal prosecutor said in closing arguments When the president was shot at in Pennsylvania I was one of the first people on either side of the aisle to condemn it Whitmer said last month at the Mackinac Policy Conference in Michigan We have to condemn political violence no matter where it comes from no matter who it is aimed at Whitmer disappointed Trump is considering pardons for group convicted in kidnap plot Trump refused to call Walz after the Saturday slayings shootings of two others and subsequent manhunt Instead he insulted the governor Why would I call him? I could call and say Hi how you doing? The guy does not have a clue Trump said of Walz He is a mess So I could be nice and call but why waste time? Walz made clear over X who did reach out to offer support My thanks to Premier Doug Ford of Ontario who called to express his condolences to the Hortman family and the people of Minnesota he said In times of tragedy I am heartened when people of different views and even different nations can rally together around our shared humanity