

Webisode 57DHXXC September 4 2025 COVID 19 Vaccine news in 4 states CA OR WA and New York

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1 Democrats in the House retire due to age Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization Axios Hill Leaders Newsletter September 3 2025 Index 1A Dodging the age wars At least 6 Democratic House Representatives plan to retire due to age 1B From the opposition it is Republican Senate Confirmation Nuclear option time and 1C Democratic Senate Recruiting Efforts Main Content 1A The big thing Dodging the age wars House Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries is using his signature light touch on the delicate subject of the reelection plans of his older members Why it matters The last eight people who died in office were Democrats Representative Jerry Nadler Democrat of New York at the age of 78 and Representative Lloyd Doggett Democrat of Texas also at the age of 78 dropped their bids for reelection in recent weeks rather than battle younger primary rivals to stay in office Representative Lloyd Doggett Democrat of Texas announced his retirement These 3 older Democratic Representatives join Representative Jan Schakowsky Democrat of Illinois at the age of 81 Representative Danny Davis Democrat of Illinois at the age of 83 and Representative Dwight Evans Democrat of Pennsylvania at the age of 71 all of whom retired in the face of primary challenges Several House Democrats told us to expect additional retirements Nadler said that the furor over the age of the former President Biden last year said something about the necessity for generational change in the party and I want to respect that Davis said On Saturday I am going to be 84 years old Reportedly Nadler Davis and Doggett did not speak with Jeffries before announcing their retirements and felt no pressure from leadership to step aside Many House Democrats 70 and older are pushing back against the idea they should make room for the next generation of leaders Seniority still counts experience still matters said Representative John Larson Democrat of Connecticut aged 77 1B Republicans go Nuclear option on Confirmations Fed up with Democratic stalling Senate Republicans are preparing to expedite the confirmation process before their next recess 1C Senate Democrats are pleased with their recruiting efforts to date They convinced former North Carolina Democratic Governor Roy Cooper to run in the open North Carolina Senate seat and former Senator Sherrod Brown Democrat of Ohio to try to recapture his Ohio seat On the Michigan Senate Democratic side three highly funded candidates are engaged in a contentious primary In Alaska Democrats are still courting former Democratic Representative Mary Peltola to challenge Republican Senator Dan Sullivan

2A The US Economy under Trump A Wall Street Journal NORC poll released yesterday found that only 25 percent of Americans believe they have a good chance of improving their standard of living Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization Heather Cox Richardson September 3 2025 A Wall Street Journal–NORC poll released yesterday found

that only 25 percent of Americans believe they have a good chance of improving their standard of living. Nearly 70 percent said it was no longer possible to work hard and get ahead. A majority of those polled said the generation before them had an easier time starting a business, buying a home or staying at home to parent a child. A different piece in the Wall Street Journal explained that there were 927 American billionaires in 2020 and 1135 in 2024. Together they are worth about 5 point 7 trillion dollars. The 100 richest of the set control more than half of the total at about 3 point 86 trillion dollars. As the number of billionaires grew, supply side economic policies in the US designed to concentrate wealth at the top of the economy among investors rather than on the demand side made up of consumers hollowed out the middle class. From 1975 to 2018 at least 50 trillion dollars moved from the bottom 90 percent to the top 1 percent. Yet another piece in the Wall Street Journal this one noted that consumer confidence is sliding. While wealthier Americans seem to be doing fine, they write rising distress about the economy is obvious among the middle class, those making about 53000 dollars to 161000 dollars a year. Chief economist at Morning Consult told the reporters, "There was a period of time briefly where the middle income consumer looked like they were being dragged up by all that was going well in the world. Then things fell off a cliff." In an interview with the Financial Times published yesterday, billionaire Ray Dalio, the founder of hedge fund Bridgewater Associates, warned that the US today looks a lot like what happened around the world in the 1930 to 1940 period. Dalio identified the policies of President Donald J. Trump as the sort of strong autocratic leadership that sprang out of the desire to take control of the financial and economic situation in the 1930s. The Trump rise in 2016 was fueled in part by his promise to defend those left behind in the supply side economy. But he abandoned his economic promises with his 2017 tax cuts that benefited the wealthy and corporations far more than average Americans and rallied his supporters with culture war issues. In 2024 Trump ran on the argument that Democrat Joe Biden had not adequately addressed inflation, although the US managed the post pandemic inflation spike better than any other developed economy, promising that he would make prices come down immediately. Instead, his tariffs and deportations have sent inflation upward again, and the budget reconciliation bill he forced through Congress is already pushing people off their healthcare insurance and threatening the survival of rural hospitals. The law Trump and the Republicans dubbed the One Big Beautiful Bill Act is profoundly unpopular, with about two thirds of Americans opposed to it. So today White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt, Trump pollster Tony Fabrizio and Trump political director James Blair met with Republican congress members to tell them that people will come to like the law if they completely rebrand it and talk about it differently. The administration officials told the congress members who have been hearing from constituents angry about the deep spending cuts of the law that they should be pushing the idea that the law helps working families. Vice President JD Vance tried this last week in Wisconsin, and this afternoon House speaker Mike Johnson, Republican of Louisiana, appeared to take that advice out for a spin, publicly referring to the law the same way Vance did as the working families tax cut act. The nonpartisan Center on Budget and Policy Priorities notes that under the law, a family earning less than 50000 dollars a year would get less than 300 dollars in tax cuts in 2027 while losing access to Medicaid and food assistance, while a filer earning more than 1 million dollars would receive about 90000 dollars in tax breaks. The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office estimates that the 10 percent of Americans at the bottom of the economy will lose about 1200 dollars a year. The Trump policies are working well for his family though. Angus Berwick of the Wall Street Journal reported that the Monday launch of their WLFI cryptocurrency netted them about 5 billion dollars on paper. Today Eric Trump launched American Bitcoin, a cryptocurrency mining company. Forbes reported today that Eric Trump is now worth at least 3 point 2 billion dollars. Meanwhile Trump continues to insist that he must have the powers of a dictator to make the country prosperous again. When a court found his use of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act to justify his sweeping tariffs was illegal, he said, "If you took away tariffs, we could end up being a third world country, although the US was not a third world country before Trump launched his tariff war in April." He has said he will take the case before the Supreme Court. If he loses there, the US might have to pay back more than 210

billion dollars to the American businesses that have paid the tariffs

On Monday a news story stated that a financial services company run by the sons of billionaire commerce secretary Howard Lutnick since Howard Lutnick joined the Trump administration have been buying up the rights to collect tariff refunds if the tariffs are struck down While making a bet on an uncertain outcome is a huge part of modern finance the idea that a company of the commerce secretary is making bets on something the commerce secretary has significant authority over is a perfect symbol of the Trump era While the Trump family and loyalists cash in on their control of the government

2B Trump continues to assert that he requires authoritarian powers to Make America Great Again Trump has relied heavily on the defense by the Supreme Court of his leeway as the leader in foreign affairs After being stymied by the courts for its actions at home Trump yesterday announced it had blown up a boat in international waters in the Caribbean with eleven people on it alleging the boat was carrying illegal drugs to the United States from Venezuela Although US forces could have stopped the boat without destroying it and often do so by shooting at engines Secretary of State Marco Rubio said the boat posed an immediate threat to the United States so the US had the right to destroy it Perhaps thinking it demonstrated power Trump circulated a video of the strike

A legal analyst said I literally cannot imagine lawyers coming up with a legal basis for the lethal strike of a suspected Venezuelan drug boat Hard to see how this would not be murder or war crime under international law that the Department of Defense DoD considers applicable A Notre Dame law professor said that the strike violated international law When the president decides this is a person who can be killed summarily there is no restraint on him she told reporters It is a very dangerous new move since Trump could decide to launch similar strikes within the United States in pursuit of those he calls drug traffickers

Representative Adam Smith of Washington the top Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee said the strike was deeply concerning noting that Trump has not identified the authority under which this action was taken raising the question of its legality and constitutionality Smith added The lack of information and transparency from the administration is even more concerning Does this mean Trump thinks he can use the US military anywhere drugs exist are sold or shipped? What is the risk of dragging the United States into yet another military conflict? A legal analyst noted that the justification for the strike was dubious enough that even Rubio appeared to want a little distance from it as he made a point of specifying that the US acted on the orders of Trump And Trump has attempted to demonstrate authoritarian power with his military displays in Los Angeles and Washington DC and yesterday he announced that we are going in to Chicago although he did not offer any specifics After Illinois governor JB Pritzker rejected the idea the president could simply send troops Trump appeared to back off saying Pritzker should ask him for help

When did we become a country where it is OK for the US president to insist on national television that a state should call him to beg for anything especially something we do not want? Pritzker said Have we truly lost all sense of sanity in this nation that we treat this as normal? A recent Reuters Ipsos poll shows just 38 percent of Americans approve of The Trump deployment of troops in Washington DC

2C The Trump Epstein Connection was discussed in the House of Representatives this week Trump has reason to be afraid of the American people for another reason too they want to see the files from the federal investigation of convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein especially now that they know Trump is mentioned in those files Speaker Johnson dismissed the House early for its August break this year to avoid having to deal with the demands of members for the release of the files but now Congress is back in session and the demands are right back on the table Trump has tried to stop Republicans from asking for the files by warning such a demand would be seen as a hostile act against the administration Today the administration arranged a military flyover during the visit of President Karol Nawrocki of Poland in honor of a Polish army pilot killed in a training exercise The flyover occurred just at the time more than 100 of the women who survived sexual grooming assault and rape in their association with Epstein and his associate convicted sex trafficker Ghislaine Maxwell spoke at a press conference outside the US Capitol drowning out their words But it did not silence the words of survivor Jess Michaels For 27 years I thought I was the only one that Jeffrey Epstein raped I believed I was alone and I was kept silent by the shame that was inside

me and by the fear outside in the world she said But I was not the only one None of us were And what once kept us silent now fuels that fire and the power of our voices We are not the footnotes in some tabloid article about an infamous predator We are the experts and the subjects of this story We are the proof that fear did not break us And we do not just speak for ourselves but for every survivor whose story is still unspoken This is what power looks like Survivors united voices joined refusing to be dismissed Know this justice and accountability are not favors from the powerful They are obligations decades overdue This moment began with the Epstein crimes but it is going to be remembered for survivors demanding justice demanding truth demanding accountability and we will not stop until survivor voices shape justice transform culture and define the future We are no longer whispers We are one powerful voice too loud to ignore and we will never be silenced again

3 Covid 19 Vaccines in New York State New Yorkers need a Covid 19 vaccine prescription plus a Legionnaires Disease update **Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization** Your Local Epidemiologist New York Edition September 4 2025 Fall is right around the corner and so are respiratory viruses Each fall and winter the big three viruses Covid 19 flu and RSV cause hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations in the US The good news is that we have vaccines for all three that help prevent against severe disease For the flu and RSV vaccines are business as usual Eligibility is clear and you can show up to most pharmacies or offices of doctors to get vaccinated Check out the Your Local Epidemiologist YLE National fall vaccine guide to help determine which vaccines you or your child should get But Covid vaccines are a different story this year Chaotic government processes and upheaval have left Covid vaccine recommendations in limbo especially in New York This is a rapidly evolving situation and while there is still a good amount we do not know we are here to help you stay grounded We will share information as it comes in and break down what it means for you as the respiratory virus season begins Note Do not miss the PDF summary at the end of this email I know a lot of you are trusted messengers! Print this out and share What changed last week regarding Covid 19 vaccines? On August 27 2025 FDA approved updated Covid 19 vaccines from Pfizer Moderna and Novavax but with limited eligibility Specifically they were approved for Adults 65 and older and Individuals under 65 with at least one high risk health condition listed here the CVS list of high risk conditions for Covid 19 vaccine eligibility The FDA also revoked the Emergency Use Authorization EUA for The Pfizer vaccine in children under 5 This leaves only The Moderna vaccine for children over 6 months and older but only for those who have an underlying condition or who see a doctor Why is this causing confusion? It feels murky because we are in a limbo period While the FDA has approved the new vaccines the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices ACIP has not yet issued recommendations and CDC has not updated its guidance ACIP and CDC will not make changes until after the next ACIP meeting which is currently scheduled for September 18 to 19 Many states including New York require that both the FDA and CDC ACIP approve vaccines before pharmacists are permitted to administer them This means that even though the updated Covid vaccines are FDA approved not all pharmacies can actually offer them yet It depends on the individual regulations and the written protocols individual pharmacy chains have in each state In practice this means that many patients who want Covid vaccines need to see their doctor or get a prescription to bring to a pharmacy This creates barriers to vaccine access in 2021 80 percent of New Yorkers got their vaccines directly from a pharmacy Nationally it is about 90 percent What is the situation in New York specifically? Covid 19 vaccine access via pharmacies depends on which pharmacy you go to Walgreens Duane Reade If you are over 65 or have an underlying condition determined by attestation of self on the scheduling portal you can make an appointment online for a vaccine at a Walgreens or Duane Reade in New York But you need to have a prescription from a doctor and bring it to the appointment CVS is Not currently offering Covid vaccines to anyone in New York right now CVS is being more conservative than Walgreens likely because of how the pharmacy chain has written their protocols but this is not totally clear Until ACIP



CDC makes official recommendations or New York changes its recommendations I am guessing Covid vaccines will stay on hold at CVS. However you can make an appointment at CVS pharmacies in New Jersey or Connecticut if you are over 65 or have one of the high risk conditions. It appears that some Minute Clinics in New York may be offering vaccines but it is not consistent. There has not been any formal guidance yet from the New York State Department of Health or the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene. There have been reports that New York State and NYC are considering issuing their own vaccine recommendations but no official announcements have been made. What is the state doing about this? New York and most other New England states recently met to discuss forming a regional health coalition to coordinate health guidance in response to instability at the CDC and ACIP. They discussed what to do when the CDC vaccine recommendations differ from the scientific consensus and whether New England states should follow the recommendations of professional medical societies instead. Organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics AAP and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists ACOG have already called for broader access to vaccines for children and pregnant individuals which contradicts the current FDA restrictions. But the hard truth is that New York should have seen this coming. Increasing instability in federal health has been ongoing for months and has widened cracks in our vaccine systems. New York state and City health departments have yet to issue local vaccine guidance or contingency plans. We need our local health leaders to step up and provide guidance in a way that the CDC and ACIP cannot right now. Without it the burden of understanding and navigating the complex vaccine landscape falls on the individual which is not something we should have to do alone. What should New Yorkers do right now? If you are over 65 or have a high risk condition you can make an appointment for a Covid shot at Walgreens or a Duane Reade Drug Store but you need to have a prescription from a doctor. The closest CVS pharmacies currently giving Covid vaccines are in New Jersey or Connecticut. If you have a high risk condition call your primary care provider to ask if they can vaccinate you or give you a prescription and if they have the vaccine in stock. If you are not in a high risk group it could still be worth checking in with your doctor. But you can also wait more clarity is expected in the coming weeks as guidance and state policies catch up. Stay tuned for more information from YLE following the upcoming ACIP meeting in the middle of September. If they recommend the vaccines and CDC signs on then we can expect more pharmacies to start vaccinating those who are eligible. For those who cannot get their Covid vaccine right now it is still a good idea to get your flu shot and pay attention to your health. If you are feeling ill avoid social gatherings wear a mask around others and get lots of rest. Bottom line. Vaccines remain the best option to prevent severe respiratory disease this season. Given the confusion surrounding Covid vaccine eligibility and availability it is best to consult your doctor about getting a shot. Love, Your New York NY Epidemiologist. Plus What else to know. Legionnaire Disease updates for New York States Go Their Own and Contradictory Ways on Vaccine Policy.

4 RFK Junior Faces Senate Finance Committee A Live Discussion Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization KFF Health News Newsletter September 4 2025 Description Health and Human Services Secretary RFK Junior is set to testify before the Senate Finance Committee on September 4. The session follows the ouster last week by RFK Junior of the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Susan Monarez. Four other senior CDC officials resigned in protest. What are the biggest takeaways? What comes next? Tune in for a post hearing discussion with KFF Health News correspondents Stephanie Armour Julie Rovner and Arthur Allen and Josh Michaud KFF associate director for Global Health Policy on September 4 at 2 pm Central Standard Time.

5 COVID 19 Vaccines in 3 Western States Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization September 3 2025 The New York Times California Oregon and Washington said they would work together to review scientific data saying the CDC could no longer be trusted. But Florida said it would abolish all vaccine mandates. Federal policies on

vaccines have been changing rapidly since RFK Junior a vaccine skeptic became secretary of Health and Human Services Three Democratic controlled West Coast states announced plans on Wednesday to form a health alliance that would review scientific data and make vaccine recommendations for their residents saying that the federal agency responsible for issuing such guidance for the country had become a political tool that increasingly peddles ideology instead of science The move which comes at a time of unparalleled turmoil at the agency the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is an effort by California Oregon and Washington to take scientific stewardship into their own hands after Health Secretary RFK Junior a vaccine skeptic has taken control of the CDC vaccine decisions Other states including several in the Northeast are considering joining in a similar effort Hours after the announcement of the 3 Western States Florida announced it was going in a starkly different direction The surgeon general said the state would end all vaccine mandates including for children to attend schools claiming in a news conference that each mandate drips with disdain and slavery Governor Ron DeSantis of Florida a Republican endorsed the plan though it was not immediately clear whether it would require legislative input The differing state moves underscored the increasingly disjointed nature of vaccine policy across the country States have always set their own vaccine policy and mandates for schoolchildren but those rules were based upon national recommendations put forth by the CDC Now that all 17 experts on the CDC advisory panel have been dismissed by RFK Junior several of them replaced by vaccine skeptics the opaque federal landscape has led to a hodgepodge of state moves Dr Paul Offit the director of the Vaccine Education Center at the Hospital of Children of Philadelphia who was recently blocked from participating in a vaccine advisory committee for the Food and Drug Administration said that unless all states aligned their guidelines with respected medical organizations like the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology the cacophony of advice could ultimately obscure scientific truth A spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services responded to news of the alliance by saying that the immunization advisory committee remains the scientific body guiding immunization recommendations in this country He said that Democratic run states completely eroded the trust of Americans in public health agencies during the pandemic and that HHS will ensure policy is based on rigorous evidence and Gold Standard Science not the failed politics of the pandemic The new alliance of Western states is intended to provide residents with scientific data about vaccine safety and efficacy and to issue guidance on vaccines for respiratory illnesses like Covid and the flu as well as an array of childhood immunizations The announcement did not specify which medical groups would be consulted in formulating the guidance but both the American Academy of Pediatrics and the American College of Obstetrics and Gynecology have publicly broken with the new federal health guidelines But the announcement did not address an array of brewing questions Among them whether health insurance plans would cover the cost of vaccines that were recommended by states but not by the federal government whether primary care doctors and pharmacies could face repercussions for providing them and whether states may continue to require certain vaccinations if they are no longer recommended by the CDC Western states formed a similar working group during the peak of the Covid pandemic to boost public confidence in vaccines States in the Northeast including Massachusetts Maine Vermont Connecticut Rhode Island New York New Jersey and Pennsylvania recently gathered to discuss coordinating their own vaccine recommendations In June the governors of California Oregon and Washington jointly condemned The RFK Junior decision to dismiss all 17 vaccine experts on the federal Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices The secretary went on to appoint vaccine skeptics to several of the posts and to end 500 million dollars in federal funding for mRNA vaccines a category that includes several of the most widely used and effective Covid shots Federal vaccine policies have been changing rapidly since RFK Junior was appointed Last week the Food and Drug Administration limited its approval of updated versions of Covid shots to people who are 65 or older or who have a medical condition that puts them at higher risk of severe illness No one else would be eligible for the new shots under the FDA approval even if they lived with someone at high risk More on the Virus Restrictions on Shots The FDA approved updated Covid vaccines and

limited who can get the shots Here is what to know Gut Issues Why does Covid cause diarrhea constipation pain and bloating? Here are some suggestions for what to do about these conditions Heart Problems One recent study found that a Covid infection doubled the risk of a major cardiovascular event for up to three years afterward People who had severe infections were especially vulnerable Paxlovid and Long Covid A new report suggested the drug might improve symptoms for some patients but results were mixed If you cannot trust the Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices and with RFK Junior as the head of HHS you cannot trust the CDC as we always have up to this point what do you do? he asked What happens if one state says one thing and another says something else? I just think it will only add to the confusion Science is losing its place as a source of truth and that is a dangerous time We are seeing the results of that

6A RFK Junior COVID 19 Vaccines RFK Junior defends chaos at federal health agencies as Democratic senators attack his disaster tenure live updates Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The New York Times Updated September 4 2025 4 58 pm Live Updates RFK Junior Rejects Criticism Data and Decorum in Contentious Hearing A combative RFK Junior defended his tenure as health secretary in a Senate hearing A prominent Republican told him that his actions were denying people vaccine Here are 5 takeaways from the hearing RFK Junior faced tough questions about his tumultuous tenure as health secretary during a dramatic hearing before the Senate Finance Committee on Thursday During his nearly seven months in office RFK Junior has upended the Department of Health and Human Services overseeing widespread changes to the institutes under his leadership None has been hit harder than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention which recommends vaccines for Americans RFK Junior a longtime vaccine skeptic has undermined immunizations fired the CDC independent advisers on vaccines and replaced them with vaccine critics and ousted the center director less than a month into the job after she refused to fire top officials and rubber stamp decisions from the advisers he had appointed Over three loud and contentious hours RFK Junior was remarkably combative and dismissive with senators refusing to budge from his stance on vaccines autism Medicaid and the CDC Here are five takeaways from the hearing Both Republicans and Democrats pressed RFK Junior on vaccine access It is been obvious from the start that the RFK Junior primary interest is to take vaccines away from Americans said Senator Ron Wyden of Oregon the ranking Democrat of the committee His actions reveal a steadfast commitment to elevating junk science and fringe conspiracies He and other senators pushed RFK Junior on the attempts of the health secretary to restrict access to vaccines Under the RFK Junior leadership health officials have narrowed who is eligible for updated Covid vaccines Several senators including Senator Bill Cassidy Republican of Louisiana pointed to the obstacles some Americans are facing in accessing the vaccines Major pharmacies in some states are currently requiring that even people who are at high risk get prescriptions for the shots Effectively we are denying people vaccine said Cassidy He supported The RFK Junior confirmation despite some misgivings but has become increasingly critical of him in recent weeks This is from Erick Erickson good conservative out of Atlanta Georgia Occasionally gives me hell My wife has Stage 4 lung cancer She is one of the people the Covid vaccine actually helps Thanks to the current mess at HHS CVS is unable to get her vaccine Secondly an email from a physician friend of mine Hey Bill I am not even sure what I am asking you but we are all confused and concerned about who can get the Covid vaccine We are having our attorney try and render an opinion but there is no firm guidance and concern about liability if vaccines are given to a patient requesting it but not on the current CDC list Pharmacists are requiring a prescription now even for patients over 65 creating a huge headache I submit these for the record Without objection I would say effectively we are denying people vaccine Senator Cantwell You are wrong Several senators pushed RFK Junior on his opposition to mRNA technology used for the first time in the Covid vaccines made by Pfizer and Moderna asking him to reconcile his criticisms with President The Trump

championing of those vaccines through Operation Warp Speed. RFK Junior has canceled 500 million dollars in mRNA research and has falsely claimed the mRNA Covid shots are the deadliest vaccines ever made. But during the hearing he maintained both that Trump deserved a Nobel Prize for his efforts and that mRNA vaccines were harmful. Senators also assailed The RFK Junior firing of all 17 advisers on the CDC vaccine recommendation panel in June. RFK Junior handpicked new members of the committee several of whom have cast skepticism on vaccines and Covid shots in particular. He plans to appoint seven additional new members to the committee which is scheduled to meet later this month. Some senators expressed alarm that the committee may vote to change recommendations on routine childhood immunizations like the hepatitis B vaccine. RFK Junior stood his ground. The hearing was punctuated with heated back and forth exchanges with RFK Junior effectively getting into shouting matches with several senators. He yelled that Senator Maggie Hassan Democrat of New Hampshire was just making stuff up after she said that RFK Junior had made it harder for Americans to get vaccines. To the points of the colleagues of Senator Cassidy that they are going to have to go off label. This is crazy talk. To prescribe to prescribe a vaccine for children. I am not making things up. Do you know how the FDA approval process works and what happens? I know exactly. Do you know what an off label I know exactly how it works. I know exactly how it works. So why so why behind closed doors. It is not behind closed doors. The industry makes the studies and they could not provide a study that said that it is effective for healthy kids. When have you produced the data that you relied on and that this FDA relied on to change those parameters? You did it behind closed doors. The data is all public. Now parents who decide that they do want their children to have You are just making stuff up. I am not. You are just making stuff up. Sometimes when you make an accusation it is kind of a confession RFK Junior. Senate Finance Committee Senators read aloud RFK Junior words from previous hearings noting that he had promised not to take vaccines away from anyone and that he would empower agency scientists to do their work. Many said he had done neither. Senator Tina Smith Democrat of Minnesota said RFK Junior had made contradictory statements. When were you lying sir? she said. When you told this committee that you were not anti vax or when you told Americans that there is no safe and effective vaccine? RFK Junior replied Both things are true. Senator Ben Ray Lujan Democrat of New Mexico pressed RFK Junior to provide protocols for studies meant to find a cause for autism. In a tense exchange RFK Junior claimed not to understand the request. You are talking gibberish he said to Lujan. In one contentious exchange with Senator Mark Warner Democrat of Virginia RFK Junior said he did not know how many Americans had died of Covid and whether the vaccines prevented Covid related deaths. The problem is they did not have the data he said prompting the senator to reply. You are sitting as secretary of health and human services. How can you be that ignorant? In fact the data are readily available. Hundreds of reports have tracked the efficacy of the vaccines since they debuted in 2021. The shots have saved millions of lives in the United States and elsewhere dozens of studies have estimated. The turmoil at the CDC is likely to worsen. Since RFK Junior took office the CDC has been in a state of chaos. Thousands of employees were fired and many others left. The agency was also the target of a shooting in August RFK Junior suggested he was not done with the agency accusing it of corruption and claiming that it was responsible for the rise of chronic diseases in the United States and for the Covid toll on Americans. What we are going to do is reorganize CDC he said adding I need to fire some of those people. In his opening remarks RFK Junior nodded to the shooting outside the CDC headquarters in Atlanta but CDC employees have said they were furious that RFK Junior gave interviews after the incident in which he called into question their integrity. The gunman is thought to have been motivated by a belief that the Covid vaccine caused him to be ill. Many CDC employees hold RFK Junior directly responsible for such misinformation. Conflicts of interest were a hot topic. RFK Junior has said he fired all the members of the vaccine panel because they had financial conflicts of interest a claim that has repeatedly been refuted. Members of the panel are carefully vetted for potential conflicts when members may have indirect conflicts they recuse themselves from the relevant discussions. But many of the new members RFK Junior appointed to the panel have biases of their own. They include people who have filed court



**declarations in cases challenging vaccines or mandates** New members include a doctor who has served as an expert witness on behalf of people who claimed they were harmed by vaccines and another doctor who in a testimony before state lawmakers **compared Covid vaccines to thalidomide** a drug that decades ago caused serious birth defects Rural hospitals and pharmacy benefit managers rounded out the discussion Concerns about the fate of rural health care in the aftermath of the Trump domestic policy bill and sweeping cuts to Medicaid also surfaced Republican senators pushed RFK Junior to discuss the 50 billion dollars in funding targeted to hospitals and clinics in rural areas which have been struggling to stay afloat We are infusing more than 50 percent increase in the amount of money that is going to rural communities over the next five years RFK Junior said But Senator Bernie Sanders independent of Vermont pushed back noting that **the legislation was expected to result in a net loss of 100 billion dollars in funding as millions of Americans lose their insurance because of the rollback of the Medicaid program by the legislation** Advocates estimate dozens of hospitals could be at risk of closing and many more will cut vital services like labor and delivery We are infusing more than a 50 percent increase in the amount of money that is going to rural communities over the next five years It is going to be the biggest infusion of federal dollars into rural health care in American history You know why? Because you are cutting 150 billion dollars for rural hospitals You are putting 50 billion dollars back That is not an infusion That is a loss of 100 billion dollars Senate Finance Committee RFK Junior was also pushed by Republicans to support bipartisan legislation aimed at better regulating giant pharmacy benefit managers which are owned by three health care conglomerates CVS Health Cigna and UnitedHealth Group He assured senators he would support such efforts noting the Trump support and said he had been in discussions with the companies about reforms Senator Peter Welch Democrat of Vermont also raised longstanding concerns about rising health care costs He argued Americans faced an affordability crisis Republican senators sharply questioned RFK Junior on vaccines Republican senators John Barrasso left and Bill Cassidy both doctors questioned the RFK Junior vaccine policy at a hearing at the Capitol on Thursday Republican senators who voted for RFK Junior the health secretary were among his harshest inquisitors on Thursday at a combative hearing where he faced a barrage of questions over his vaccine policy and his recent firing of the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention The three hour long Senate Finance Committee hearing at times devolved into a partisan slugfest with Democrats who have long criticized RFK Junior calling for his resignation and one accusing him of being hazardous to the health of Americans But a handful of Republican senators including two doctors were particularly tough in their questioning of the secretary especially when it came to his vaccine skepticism Their remarks suggested deep irritation among some GOP senators who under intense pressure from President Trump swallowed reservations about The RFK Junior past assertions and voted to put him in charge of the public health of America Senator Bill Cassidy of Louisiana a gastroenterologist and chairman of the health committee who ultimately cast a key vote to confirm RFK Junior after receiving his commitment that he would not disrupt access to vaccinations said that the health secretary RFK Junior actions and policies since he took office amounted to doing just that **Effectively we are denying people vaccine Cassidy said as he wrapped up a sharp line of questioning on the topic RFK Junior shot back You are wrong** Another harsh questioner was Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming an orthopedic surgeon who as the Number 2 Republican was responsible for rounding up the votes in the Senate to confirm RFK Junior back in February I support vaccines I am a doctor Vaccines work Barrasso said Secretary RFK Junior in your confirmation hearing you promised to uphold the highest standards for vaccines Since then I have grown deeply concerned Warning that Americans do not know who to rely on Barrasso asked the secretary to lay out how he would make certain that vaccine guidance was clear evidence based and trustworthy He also asked RFK Junior to lay out the safeguards he had in place to make sure that decisions at the CDC were based solely on science and not politics Without outlining specific policies RFK Junior replied We are going to do that through telling the truth and not through propaganda I am making them understand that everything that we say is true Democrats pressed RFK Junior repeatedly on his firing of Susan Monarez the CDC director after she refused to oust

career agency officials and back the vaccine recommendations of his handpicked advisers. In response the secretary called Doctor Monarez a liar and rejected her account of the events leading up to her dismissal. I did not say that to her and I never had a private meeting with her he added. But Republicans also appeared uneasy about the swift dismissal of an official who the Senate had confirmed just a month ago. Senator Thom Tillis Republican of North Carolina read RFK Junior his own words from his confirmation hearing in which he pledged not to impose his beliefs on health policy. The decision to fire the CDC director in response to her refusal to accept the recommendations of vaccine advisers seems to be contradictory to that the senator noted. Tillis later told The New York Times that he wanted more information from the secretary on the personnel shake up at the CDC. Three top officials at the agency resigned after the firing of Ms. Monarez citing concern over the lack of science based decision making at the agency under RFK Junior. Tillis who since voting to confirm RFK Junior announced he will not seek to be elected again next year pressed the secretary to explain his decisions to install his own advisers on the panel that recommends which vaccines Americans should take cancel contracts for the development of mRNA vaccines and other actions that have alarmed mainstream public health leaders. He quoted the words of RFK Junior himself from his confirmation hearing back to him. You will do nothing that makes it difficult or discourages people from taking vaccines Tillis said. There seem to be several reports that would seem to refute that. Tillis declined to say whether he had lost confidence in RFK Junior. The secretary has a lot of work left to do the senator said adding There have got to be some solid answers to questions. It remained unclear what steps the Republicans who pressed RFK Junior may or may not take to protect access to vaccines. We will find out said Cassidy when asked if he believed RFK Junior when he said that Doctor Monarez had lied. In an opinion essay published in The Wall Street Journal on Thursday Doctor Susan Monarez accused RFK Junior of a deliberate effort to weaken the American public health system and vaccine protections. But Cassidy has not committed to holding a hearing of his panel the Senate Committee on Health Education Labor and Pensions on the firing of Doctor Monarez or the RFK Junior vaccine policies. Which States Allow Vaccine Exemptions for Children? All 50 states have some vaccination requirements for children entering school. All allow medical exemptions while some allow exemptions based on religious or personal reasons. RFK Junior has been remarkably salty and dismissive with the senators at times today. As Senator Wyden who was sharply critical of him from the start made some closing remarks RFK Junior took out his phone looked down at it and began to scroll. Moments later after three loud and contentious hours the hearing arrived at its close. Asked if he would like to make any final comments RFK Junior declined saying I think I will have mercy on everybody and let us adjourn. Ron Wyden the ranking Democrat on the committee is getting a final word as the hearing nears its close. He pressed RFK Junior to commit that he can assign his best scientists to review the safety of mifepristone a drug used in medical abortions and elicited a rare calm response in a combative hearing. RFK Junior agreed that his agency would deliver good science and good scientists. Senator Peter Welch Democrat of Vermont pressed RFK Junior on a perennial problem in the United States that has gotten worse in recent years rising health care costs. We have a health care affordability crisis in this country he said noting that Obamacare premiums are increasing significantly in his state. Senator Raphael Warnock of Georgia pushed RFK Junior on the reported motives of the gunman who attacked the CDC headquarters in Atlanta last month. The shooter had believed that the Covid vaccine had made him ill and wanted to raise awareness of that issue the senator said. He pointed out that RFK Junior had never been to the agency before the shooting and had not been briefed by any of its scientists about vaccines. RFK Junior did visit the premises after the shooting but no employees were present. Many CDC employees hold RFK Junior directly responsible for the misinformation that may have led to the shooting. RFK Junior said Covid vaccines were much less necessary now because the virus has mutated it is much less dangerous where there is a lot of natural immunity and herd immunity and so the calculus is different and it is complicated. Setting aside the incorrect claim about herd immunity RFK Junior makes good points. There is indeed much more immunity in the population. But his argument does not account for groups that are still at risk including healthy pregnant women. Nor does it allow for healthy

people who may wish to be vaccinated because they live with an immunocompromised person or because of occupational exposure to opt to get the shot. RFK Junior and Senator Marshall are raising questions about the hepatitis B vaccine. RFK Junior has repeatedly raised doubts about whether newborns should receive the hepatitis B vaccine. Mothers who have hepatitis B can pass the virus to their babies during birth. The CDC has recommended the hepatitis B vaccine for all infants since 1991. The shots protect against the virus which can lead to liver disease that can require transplants cause lifelong illness and even lead to death. Over the last few days Senator Bill Cassidy Republican of Louisiana and a physician has posted on X about the importance of vaccinating all newborns against the virus. **Senator Roger Marshall Republican of Kansas repeated the RFK Junior misleading summation that children receive 76 vaccination jabs.** RFK Junior had said as many as 92 by age 18. Marshall also pointed out that The RFK Junior decision to **restrict vaccines to adults older than 65 is in line with the policies in Britain and France.** But what the senator did not say is that the vaccines are still approved in those countries for people who would like to take it. In the United States the Food and Drug Administration has limited approval of the vaccine to older adults meaning **others must seek the vaccine off label and may need to pay out of pocket.** **That makes access essentially impossible.** Senators have repeatedly read RFK Junior words from previous hearings back to him noting that he had promised not to take vaccines away from anyone and that he would empower agency scientists to do their work. Several contend that he has done neither. Senator Tina Smith Democrat of Minnesota said RFK Junior had made contradictory statements depending on his circumstances. When were you lying sir? she said. When you told this committee that you were not antivax? Or when you told Americans that there is no safe and effective vaccine? RFK Junior replied Both things are true. Last time you were before Congress Secretary RFK Junior you claimed and I quote I have never been antivax. I have never told the public to avoid a vaccination. But in a podcast you said the opposite. You said there is no vaccine that is safe and effective. So that sure sounds antivax to me Secretary RFK Junior. So let me ask you when were you lying sir? When you told this committee that you were not antivax or when you told Americans that there is no safe and effective vaccine? Both things are true. Senator Bernie Sanders came prepared to take on the RFK Junior repeated claims that lawmakers were unduly influenced by campaign contributions from pharmaceutical companies. In a prior hearing RFK Junior referred to a sheet of paper showing how many dollars each senator accepted from drug companies. Sanders pushed back on Thursday suggesting that RFK Junior claims that every entity in the medical establishment is corrupt but you. And you know we have a corrupt campaign finance system Sanders said. RFK Junior said he was restricting access to the Covid vaccines because there was no clinical data for the newer versions. But he is leaving out an important distinction. At this point when people have had multiple Covid vaccine doses and infections it would be impossible to conduct clinical trials. The trials would need to be conducted when many people could get infected. It would not be ethical to withhold protection against a dangerous pathogen as it would be to deny treatment to patients with a disease by giving some people a placebo. Results from such a trial would also be available too late to be of use during that Covid peak and may not be useful against the next variant. Instead companies rely on lab studies that show that a newer version of the vaccine produces antibodies against a variant a proxy for effectiveness. RFK Junior also said there was no data to indicate that the vaccines were necessary. In fact even healthy pregnant women are at increased risk of complications including stillbirth from Covid. RFK Junior says that anyone can get the Covid booster. I am not taking them away from people he said. But some Americans report that they are already struggling to access Covid vaccines because of regulatory confusion around pharmacy rules and new narrowed eligibility criteria from the FDA. RFK Junior disputed the Doctor Susan Monarez account of her firing as CDC director. I told her that she had to resign because I asked her Are you a trustworthy person? And she said no he said. RFK Junior has previously refused to discuss his interactions with Monarez saying he would not talk about personnel matters. He said she was lying when she said he had fired her because she would not accede to his demands on vaccine policy. No I told her that she had to resign because I asked her Are you a trustworthy person? And she said No. So if you had an employee

who told you they were not trustworthy would you ask them to resign Senator? So, I am sorry but this is not what she has said publicly She has said Well I am not surprised about that So you are saying she is lying? Yes Every conversation I had with her Let me just get this straight This is the same person that less than a month earlier you stood next to her and described her as unimpeachable and you had full confidence in her and that you had full confidence in her scientific credentials And in a month she became a liar? You should ask her what changed And by the way a month ago you were voting against her because you thought she was either incompetent ineligible or unsuited to the task And now I agree with you I was afraid she was going to bend the knee to you and Donald Trump and it looks like she did not bend the knee so you fired her Most Republican senators breaking away from the hearing to go vote are reticent to speak on the RFK Junior combative appearance before the committee Rocking and rolling said Bill Cassidy Republican of Louisiana asked to respond to the testimony of the secretary He had his own sharp exchange with RFK Junior Senator Ron Johnson Republican of Wisconsin supported The RFK Junior claims that the Covid vaccines are dangerous saying there are data showing that people who got the vaccines were more susceptible to chronic illness than those who did not It is unclear which data he is referring to but dozens of studies across the globe have looked at Covid vaccines and concluded that the side effects when they occur are very uncommon It is also unclear how the data the senator referred to would separate effects of the vaccine from the impact of Covid which is known to cause long lasting problems RFK Junior claimed that American children receive between 69 and 92 vaccines in order to be fully compliant between maternity and 18 years He has also repeatedly said that only one of those vaccines was tested against a placebo Both statements need clarification Most states mandate that children receive about 20 shots to enter school but those shots include doses of eight or so vaccines depending on which combination vaccines are used that together protect against a dozen diseases Even including vaccines that are recommended and not required such as a yearly flu shot children may receive 35 shots by age 5 The RFK Junior math would be correct only if the number included vaccines given in pregnancy and if each component and each dose of a combination product were considered a separate vaccine Researchers have compiled a spreadsheet of trials that did indeed test the shots against placebos Newer versions of those vaccines would not be tested against placebo because it would be unethical to withhold lifesaving shots from children RFK Junior claimed that the vaccine manufacturers could not produce a study showing that the Covid vaccines were effective for healthy children That is incorrect The companies did indeed test the vaccine in children although they did so after the shots had been shown to be safe and effective in adults That is typical for all products given to children RFK Junior had a heated back and forth with Senator Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire just now was the most striking example yet of his disdain for members of the committee and his disregard for Capitol protocol This is crazy talk You are just making stuff up RFK Junior said to Hassan as she accused him of reducing transparency around health data and limiting access to vaccines Sometimes when you make an accusation it is kind of a confession RFK Junior the Democratic senator replied To the points of colleagues of Senator Cassidy that they are going to have to go off label This is crazy talk To prescribe to prescribe a vaccine for children I am not making things up Do you know how the FDA approval process works and what happens? I know exactly Do you know what an off label use is? I know exactly how it works I know exactly how it works So why so why behind closed doors It is not behind closed doors The industry makes the studies and they could not provide a study that said that it is effective for healthy kids When have you produced the data that you relied on and that this FDA relied on to change those parameters? You did it behind closed doors The data is all public Now parents who decide that they do want their children to have You are just making stuff up I am not You are just making stuff up Sometimes when you make an accusation it is kind of a confession RFK Junior Maggie Hassan a Democrat of New Hampshire and RFK Junior traded fire over the FDA decision to authorize Covid vaccines for people 65 and older but only for younger people with underlying conditions that put them at risk for severe disease RFK Junior and Hassan accused each other of lying and did not delve into the substance of the decisions We have reported that Doctor Vinay Prasad who RFK Junior



has staunchly supported repeatedly overruled agency scientists in narrowing the scope of FDA Covid vaccine approvals Senator Maggie Hassan Democrat of New Hampshire returned to the fact that RFK Junior did not know how many lives were saved by the Covid vaccines noting that the vaccines are estimated to have saved millions of lives Those are modeling studies RFK Junior said He is correct But these sorts of studies are the best way to estimate the number of lives saved It is impossible to prove that any particular individual life can be saved by a vaccine The RFK Junior Senate hearing quickly devolved into a shouting match over vaccines COVID 19 and the CDC

6B On the Attack RFK Junior congressional testimony Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates a 501C3 nonprofit organization The Atlantic September 4 2025

Some Republican senators it seems have begun to fret that RFK Junior was not being entirely honest when he sought their votes to confirm him as secretary of Health and Human Services Back in January RFK Junior reassured lawmaker after lawmaker that he would not limit access to vaccines But today before the Senate Finance Committee he aggressively defended antivaccine talking points alarming Democrats and Republicans alike You promised to uphold the highest standards for vaccines Senator John Barrasso of Wyoming a Republican told RFK Junior today Since then I have grown deeply concerned The hearing today was always going to be tumultuous Although the panel was pitched as an opportunity to hear about the Trump health care agenda it was a rare opportunity for senators to publicly question the secretary about his recent attacks on the US vaccination system In the past 200 days RFK Junior has terminated mRNA research grants stuffed a CDC advisory panel with antivaccine activists and propped up unproven treatments during a deadly measles outbreak Last week he pushed out CDC Director Susan Monarez whom senators had confirmed to her position less than a month prior Lawmakers understandably were displeased In the hearing today RFK Junior claimed that Monarez had told him that she was untrustworthy after taking the job to which Republican Senator Thom Tillis replied I would suggest in the interview you ask them if they are truthful rather than four weeks after we took the time of the US Senate to confirm the person All the while RFK Junior has insisted that these actions have not harmed the vaccination system of the US At the hearing today Senator Bill Cassidy said he had heard from a fellow doctor that the recent decision of Trump to narrow eligibility for COVID vaccines was causing confusion CVS acting on the CDC recommendations is now requiring prescriptions for COVID shots in certain areas of the country and stopped offering them in a few states at least temporarily Walgreens appears to have a similar policy I would say effectively we are denying people vaccines Cassidy said RFK Junior replied to him You are wrong That curt response was cordial compared with how RFK Junior addressed several Democratic senators who had similar questions Just a few minutes after shooting down the Cassidy concerns he was yelling at Democratic Senator Maggie Hassan of New Hampshire for alleging that people who want COVID vaccines are being denied them because of the Trump actions Everybody can get the vaccine You are just making things up You are making things up to scare people and it is a lie RFK Junior told her RFK Junior also defended his previous concerns about the COVID shots citing the risk that some people who get the shot may develop a potentially deadly inflammation of the heart known as myocarditis That risk is real but very small He told Senator Michael Bennett that he agreed with Retsef Levi whom RFK Junior has elevated to the advisory panel of the CDC earlier this year who has claimed that evidence is mounting and indisputable that mRNA vaccines cause serious harm including death especially among young people After Bennett said that he was lying RFK Junior shouted back Are you saying the mRNA vaccine has never been associated with myocarditis or pericarditis in teenagers? Is that what you are trying to tell us? RFK Junior is a longtime antivaccine activist who has made a career out of going after corporations and politicians On his path to becoming health secretary however he showed only glimpses of this combative side During his confirmation hearing for example he accused Bernie Sanders of corruption because of campaign donations that Sanders had allegedly received from pharmaceutical companies According to Sanders



the donations were small and came from pharma employees. But on the issue of vaccines, RFK Junior previously seemed eager to avoid a fight. When Cassidy outlined during The RFK Junior confirmation hearing the numerous studies disproving a link between vaccines and autism, RFK Junior responded, "You show me those scientific studies and you and I can meet about it." Today one of the few lawmakers RFK Junior seemed content to sit back and listen to was Ron Johnson, arguably the most anti-vaccine member of the Senate. RFK Junior nodded as Johnson laid out his case for why he believes that COVID vaccines are associated with thousands of deaths. In fact, Johnson is basing his claim on a government database where anyone can report a potential side effect from a vaccine, which is not meant to demonstrate a causal link between the vaccine and death. This sort of aggression from a Cabinet secretary could seem like political suicide. The lawmakers RFK Junior was chiding not only have the power to investigate his work at HHS; they also control the funds he needs to keep his agency running. But Congress has never removed a Cabinet secretary from office. And even if some Republican senators are starting to raise concerns, one very prominent Republican still seems to remain in the RFK Junior corner. Earlier this week, Trump questioned the value of COVID vaccines and the massive effort that his first administration orchestrated to bring them quickly to the public in 2020. I hope OPERATION WARP SPEED was as BRILLIANT as many say it was, he wrote on Truth Social. If not, we all want to know about it and why??? As RFK Junior grows bolder in his attacks, Trump has been his greatest enabler. Trump achieved the rapid delivery of vaccines during the pandemic with Operation Warp Speed, yet he seems to be happily cheering RFK Junior on in dismantling that legacy. He might share the RFK Junior views, or perhaps he sees the pitfalls of dismissing a secretary who has some of the highest favorability ratings in the Cabinet. Even recent speculation that RFK Junior plans to run for president in 2028 failed to generate a public rebuke from Trump. RFK Junior has since denied that he is running. At least for the time being, RFK Junior looks invincible. He knows it. Lastly, here are four new stories from The Atlantic: The Trump quest for a scary prison. The mass shooters are performing for one another. Florida decided there were too many children. How did Taylor Swift convince the world that she is relatable?

7 White House Orders Agencies to Escalate Fight Against Offshore Wind. The effort involves several agencies that typically have little to do with wind power, including the Health and Human Services Department. Excerpts edited by RAWSEP Residents Against Wood Smoke Emission Particulates, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization. The New York Times, September 3, 2025. The White House has taken the extraordinary step of instructing a half-dozen agencies to draft plans to thwart the American offshore wind industry as it intensifies its governmentwide attack on a source of renewable energy that President Trump has criticized as ugly, expensive, and inefficient. Susie Wiles, the White House chief of staff, and Stephen Miller, a senior White House adviser, are leading the effort, according to two people briefed on the matter who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to comment publicly. Agencies that typically have little to do with offshore wind power have been drawn into the effort, the two people said. At the Health and Human Services Department, for instance, officials are studying whether wind turbines are emitting electromagnetic fields that could harm human health. And the Defense Department is probing whether the projects could pose risks to national security. Last week, RFK Junior, the health and human services secretary, said he was working with Doug Burgum, the interior secretary, Howard Lutnick, the commerce secretary, Chris Wright, the energy secretary, and Pete Hegseth, the defense secretary, as part of a departmental coalition team to investigate the risks from offshore wind farms. We are all working together on this issue, RFK Junior said during a cabinet meeting. Brigit Hirsch, a spokeswoman for Lee Zeldin, the Environmental Protection Agency administrator, said on Tuesday that he too is involved in discussions about offshore wind at a high level. And Sean Duffy, the transportation secretary, last week canceled or withdrew 679 million dollars in federal funding for marine terminals, port improvements, and other facilities that were designed to support the offshore wind industry. Duffy called them wasteful wind projects. With Little Explanation, Trump Throws Wind Industry Into Chaos. The

Trump administration is halting wind projects that had been approved financed and underway while providing little to no justification Aug 26 2025 Anna Kelly a White House spokeswoman said that agencies are working to comply with The Trump January executive order that called for a review of wind projects on federal lands and waters Agencies are implementing that Executive Order by evaluating whether they have any policies in place that would advantage wind developers over more effective and reliable types of energy such as coal natural gas and nuclear Ms Kelly wrote in an email When the Trump administration abruptly ordered that construction stop last month at Revolution Wind a 4 billion dollar wind farm off the coast of Rhode Island that is 80 percent complete it alluded to national security concerns without elaborating The administration has since seized on the idea that offshore wind projects could threaten national security In particular there are concerns about radar relative to undersea and it does not have to be a large Russian sub but undersea drones Burgum said on CNN last week referring to the decision to halt construction at Revolution Wind People with bad ulterior motives to the United States could launch a swarm drone attack through a wind farm The radar gets very distorted if you are trying to detect and avoid if you have got drones coming It is a whole range of things that need to be reviewed that I do not think were Burgum said Some experts said they were baffled by those comments By law offshore wind projects already undergo an extensive review process by the Defense Department The Pentagon had participated in a review of Revolution Wind and in 2023 signed off on modifications that would reduce or avoid effects on military radar operations RFK Junior has warned that the subsea cables used in offshore wind farms are emitting an electromagnetic field that can harm people and whales But experts say that these fields are similar to those emitted by many household appliances and there is no evidence that they have negative environmental or health effects The impression they are leaving which I think is the truth is that they are grasping at straws said John Leshy who served as general counsel for the Interior Department during the Clinton administration Trump has disparaged wind power ever since he failed 14 years ago to stop an offshore wind farm visible from one of his golf courses in Scotland He railed against wind and solar power during his presidential campaign last year when he also promised oil and gas executives that he would make policy changes that would help their industry such as rolling back environmental rules After Trump returned to the White House in January one of his first orders of business was a sweeping mandate to halt all leasing of federal lands and waters for new wind farms His administration has since gone after wind farms that had been given federal permits by the Biden administration and were either under construction or about to start In April the Interior Department ordered that work be stopped at Empire Wind a 5 billion dollar wind farm off the coast of New York that had received all necessary approvals from the Biden administration and was already being built After several weeks and negotiations with Gov Kathy Hochul Democrat of New York the administration allowed Empire Wind to proceed White House officials suggested they had done so only after Ms Hochul agreed to approve new gas pipelines in the state She denied that any such deal had been made In August the administration shocked the industry by ordering construction halted on Revolution Wind It also signaled plans to rescind federal approvals for the Maryland Offshore Wind Project which had not yet begun construction but would consist of up to 114 wind turbines off Ocean City Md Last Friday the Trump administration said in a legal filing that it intended to reconsider the approvals that the Biden administration had granted the South Coast Wind project about 20 miles south of Nantucket Mass The town and county of Nantucket have sued to stop the project which has not begun construction citing a rushed and faulty permitting process The administration will make a decision by Sept 18 according to the filing On Wednesday the Trump administration said in another court filing that it also intended to reconsider federal approvals for the New England Wind project about 20 miles south of Marthas Vineyard in Massachusetts Construction has not yet begun If completed it would be one of the largest offshore wind projects in the country There are three additional offshore wind projects in the United States that have received federal permits and are under construction Vineyard Wind off Marthas Vineyard in Massachusetts Sunrise Wind off Long Island New York and Coastal Virginia Offshore Wind off Virginia Beach Over the weekend the

Democratic governors of Connecticut Massachusetts New Jersey New York and Rhode Island released a letter warning that revoking permits for offshore wind farms could be destabilizing for a wide range of energy projects The US markets operate on certainty the governors wrote Canceling projects that have already been fully permitted including some near completion sends the worrisome message to investors that the work can be stopped on a whim During the cabinet meeting last week RFK Junior raised concern that debris from a damaged wind turbine blade had washed up on the shores of Nantucket last year The incident at Vineyard Wind the second large scale offshore wind farm in America prompted the closure of several beaches to swimmers An Interior Department investigation into the cause of that incident is continuing In the meantime the Texas Public Policy Foundation a conservative advocacy group with ties to the oil and gas industry last month petitioned the administration to rescind the Vineyard Wind construction and operation plan Our petition is intended to bring Vineyard Wind to the front of the burner if you will at the Interior Department said Ted Hadzi Antich a senior attorney with the Texas Public Policy Foundation The RFK Junior dislike for offshore wind power dates to his crusade against Cape Wind a proposed 130 turbine project off Cape Cod RFK Junior from one of the most powerful political families in America fought the project from its inception in 2001 to its collapse in 2017 saying it threatened the views from their Cape Cod estate The RFK Junior neighbor the billionaire industrialist William I Koch also spent roughly 5 million dollars fighting the project The Interior Department had previously reviewed the potential health and environmental effects of the electromagnetic fields emitted by the undersea cables that connect wind farms to land An 102 page report of the Interior Department published last year concluded that while those fields could potentially have some effect on certain species in the immediate vicinity of the cables the broader environmental effects were nonsignificant Since 2006 the US military has studied the potential for offshore wind turbines to disrupt radar It has generally concluded that the risk is real but can be offset with planning and technological upgrades It is a false narrative to say that offshore wind turbines threaten national security said Kirk Lippold a retired Navy commander who now writes about energy There are a lot of options including operator training that can mitigate many of those issues Of the Burgum warning that drones could attack the United States by going through wind farms Lippold was dismissive If we are at a point where undersea drones are operating within US territorial waters that would be an incredible intelligence and military failure he said They are making some very specious arguments to try to justify shutting these wind projects down

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