

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

May 9, 2025

Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20201

Martin Makary, MD
Commissioner
Food and Drug Administration
10903 New Hampshire Ave.
Silver Spring, MD 20993

Dear Secretary Kennedy and Commissioner Makary,

We write with concern about recent workforce terminations and proposed reorganization plans at the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that will weaken the Human Foods Program. We urge you to abandon these plans before Americans become even sicker.

The Human Foods Program oversees 78 percent of food in the United States. It enforces federal laws, coordinates with other federal agencies and state and local governments, and distributes public health information. Further, it combats diet-related chronic diseases, such as heart disease and certain cancers, that shorten lives and contribute to rising health care costs. The Human Foods Program is one of the best positioned federal offices to help “Make America Healthy Again,” but the Trump Administration has undermined the program through workforce terminations, funding cuts, and haphazard “reorganizations,” all of which will put the health and well-being of Americans at risk.

For example, in March, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced plans to eliminate 3,500 FDA employees, including hundreds of workers in the Human Foods Program and nearly 170 workers in the Office of Inspections and Investigations, who helped to book travel for inspectors and processed reimbursements. In addition, FDA is cutting funding to state inspection offices, which conduct more than 50 percent of inspections at processed food facilities, 90 percent of inspections at produce facilities, and all inspections at restaurants. In the face of too many serious outbreaks and recalls, FDA has not taken the steps necessary to inspect food facilities or address serious issues, such as prior to the nationwide infant formula recall in 2022. The Government Accountability Office found that food inspections need to be strengthened to prevent outbreaks. However, HHS’ changes will force food inspectors to spend valuable time booking their own travel and seeking approvals, rather than inspecting food facilities. This is careless and will lead to even fewer inspections—and less safe food.

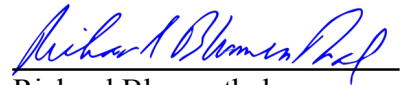
HHS also announced a significant reorganization, including the closure of regional offices in Chicago, New York, Boston, Seattle, and San Francisco, and the closure of laboratories across the nation. Eliminating these regional offices will reduce state and local governments’ access to HHS resources, and the decision to shutter laboratories across the nation—some which had been working to curb the spread of bird flu—will lead to even slower response times to future outbreaks. Further, reports that FDA is considering combining all product offices into a single Office of Product Evaluation and Regulation would further undermine oversight and enforcement.

Americans deserve access to the safest and healthiest food. But, too often, it has been a source of sickness, rather than a source of health. The Trump Administration's recent actions, sadly, will not change that—and will not “Make America Healthy Again.” Americans will become even sicker. We encourage HHS and FDA to abandon these plans and invest in improving the health and well-being of Americans.

Sincerely,



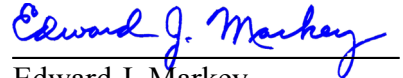
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United States Senator



Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



Kirsten Gillibrand
United States Senator



Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



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United States Senator