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February 12, 2025

United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to VOTE NO on the nomination of Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. as Secretary of Health and Human Services. Votes on this issue may be scored in NEA's report card for the 119th Congress.

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) touches the daily lives of America's children and families in tangible ways. It has more than a dozen divisions that include the National Institutes of Health (NIH); Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); and Medicaid/CHIP, which cover 38 million children comprising nearly half their total enrollment. During his nomination hearings, Mr. Kennedy showed a lack of understanding of Medicaid and the shared role of states and the federal government in implementing this vital program.

Moreover, Mr. Kennedy has never managed an organization nearly as big and complex as HHS. Nor has he demonstrated the scientific knowledge and scientific literacy the job requires. NIH, which would be under his purview, has 27 institutes and centers that support and drive biomedical research nationwide. Mr. Kennedy said during his nomination hearing that he plans to fire NIH employees, which would threaten medical advances and devastate the biomedical research workforce and related professions.

While his declared focus is making America healthy again, Mr. Kennedy's previous perspectives on vaccination imply the opposite. The implications are deeply troubling, especially for the safety of public schools and the communities they serve. While vaccination requirements for attending PreK-12 schools are set at the state level, and may vary by community, the Secretary of Health and Human Services oversees development of hugely influential recommendations and contributes to directives that impact health and safety nationwide.

In short, Mr. Kennedy is unfit to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services because he has inadequate management experience, lacks scientific understanding, and blatantly disregards scientific data and information. We urge you to VOTE NO on his nomination.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan  
Director of Government Relations  
National Education Association