

March 6, 2025

Dear Senators,

The undersigned 82 organizations committed to reproductive rights, health, justice and health equity urge you to vote against David Weldon's nomination to serve as Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

David Weldon poses a danger to the CDC's mission and is a highly dangerous nominee who has shown a persistent commitment to abusing positions of power to further his own personal beliefs, often at the expense of public health and people's freedoms. While serving as a congressman for Florida's 15th district from 1995 to 2009, Weldon actively worked to dismantle science-based health care policy through his support of anti-abortion and anti-vaccine legislation. As a legislator, he authored the Weldon Amendment, a harmful anti-abortion appropriations rider;¹ was part of early efforts to defund Planned Parenthood;² supported numerous bills restricting reproductive rights;³ and touted junk-science claims falsely linking abortion to breast cancer.⁴ Furthermore, throughout his career, Weldon has promoted anti-vaccine conspiracy theories and questioned the safety and efficacy of universally accepted and scientifically proven vaccines.

Given Weldon's history of prioritizing his own ideological beliefs over evidence-based health care policy, his leadership could jeopardize the CDC's mission status as "the nation's leading science-based, data-driven, service organization that protects the public's health."⁵ By authoring the Weldon Amendment,⁶ Weldon has played a key role in restricting access to abortion care over the last two decades. The so-called "conscience clause," which has been included in every appropriations bill since its introduction in 2005, emboldens health care providers to refuse to perform or participate in abortion care, even if such refusals violate patients' rights or compromises their health. The Weldon Amendment has no provisions to protect patient access to abortion care. This amendment has significantly undermined reproductive rights and has been weaponized by hostile administrations to penalize states that want to protect abortion access.

David Weldon proudly boasts about his "100% pro-life voting record."⁷ Throughout his fifteen years in Congress, he supported several anti-abortion bills, including: H.R. 760 - a harmful bill that has led to misinformation and stigmatization around abortions later in pregnancy;⁸ S. 403 - a bill to criminalize

¹ NWLC, The Weldon Amendment: An Anti-Abortion Weapon for the Trump Administration (2025), <https://nwlc.org/resource/the-weldon-amendment-a-poison-pill-rider-for-abortion-access/#:~:text=But%20what%20the%20Weldon%20Amendment,patient%20access%20to%20abortion%20services>.

² David Weldon, *Issue Position: Sanctity of Life*, vote smart (Jan. 1, 2012) <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/public-statement/719869/issue-position-sanctity-of-life>.

³ *Agency Watch*, Dr. David Weldon, Center for Reproductive Rights, <https://reproductiverights.org/dr-david-weldon/>.

⁴ Reps. David Weldon & Tom Coburn, *Letter to the Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations* (Feb. 23, 1998), <https://link.lib.fit.edu/files/original/b3d3becd8c0e34f92cfd8ffed26757a7.pdf>.

⁵ Ctrs. for Disease Control & Prevention: About CDC, https://www.cdc.gov/about/cdc/index.html#cdc_about_cio_mission-our-mission/ (last visited Feb. 18, 2025).

⁶ NWLC, The Weldon Amendment: An Anti-Abortion Weapon for the Trump Administration (2025), <https://nwlc.org/resource/the-weldon-amendment-a-poison-pill-rider-for-abortion-access/#:~:text=But%20what%20the%20Weldon%20Amendment,patient%20access%20to%20abortion%20services>.

⁷ David Weldon, *Issue Position: Sanctity of Life*, vote smart (Jan. 1, 2012) <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/public-statement/719869/issue-position-sanctity-of-life>.

⁸ H.R. 760, 108th Cong. (2003), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/760>; see 108th Cong., 1st Sess., H.R. Roll. No. 242, (2003), <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2003242> (showing David Weldon voted in favor of the bill).

transporting minors across state lines for abortion care;⁹ H.R. 6099 - a so-called “abortion counseling” bill that would have forced patients to read and sign a junk-science filled statement with false claims regarding fetal pain prior to procedures.¹⁰ David Weldon’s anti-abortion voting record demonstrates his willingness to put his personal beliefs above the health and safety of patients.

The CDC plays a crucial role in ensuring the health and safety of all Americans. If confirmed, Weldon’s responsibilities grant him access to sensitive public health data that, if misused, could put abortion patients and other targeted groups at greater risk of surveillance and criminalization. As Director of the CDC, he could attempt to require states to collect and report data on abortions, including: the states of residence of those seeking abortions; their reasons for seeking abortions; and the methods of abortion care they received. Currently, this data reporting is voluntary and many states decline to participate, but Project 2025 proposes making reporting to the CDC mandatory and weaponizing Medicaid funding as means of enforcement. Making this reporting mandatory and adding medically unnecessary questions could place abortion providers and patients at risk in the context of an administration that is hostile to abortion rights. Further, it would contribute to a culture of surveillance that could lead to greater criminalization,¹¹ and negatively impact the patient-provider relationship, while placing additional burdens on abortion providers. In the year after *Roe v. Wade* was wrongly overturned, studies have shown a significant increase in criminalization related to abortion, birth, and loss of pregnancy, with a disproportionate impact on Black, Brown, and low-income women.¹² Moreover, as Director of the CDC, Weldon would have the authority to weaponize his beliefs by conducting biased studies or suppressing evidence that yet again proves abortion is safe. This could result in further mis- and disinformation that seeks to mislead people about the science and safety of abortion care.

The CDC must be led by someone who respects science-based medicine and understands the importance of patient autonomy. As a result, our concerns about Weldon extend beyond the threat he poses to abortion rights to his anti-vaccine advocacy. Weldon has spent his career promoting debunked claims about vaccines and proposing legislation that would interfere with independent vaccine oversight. In particular, he challenged the CDC’s recommendation of Gardasil, the vaccine that protects against human papillomavirus and is credited with considerably reducing rates of cervical cancer.¹³ Alarming, Weldon introduced the “Vaccine Safety and Public Confidence Assurance Act” in 2007 with the goal of politicizing vaccine safety.¹⁴

⁹ S. 403, 109th Cong. (2006), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/senate-bill/403>; see 109th Cong., 2nd Sess., H.R. Roll No. 479, (2006), <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2006479> (showing David Weldon voted in favor of the bill).

¹⁰ H.R. 6099, 109th Cong. (2006), <https://www.congress.gov/bill/109th-congress/house-bill/6099>; see 109th Cong., 2nd Sess., H.R. Roll No. 526, (2006), <https://clerk.house.gov/Votes/2006526> (showing David Weldon voted in favor of the bill).

¹¹ Kavattur, Purvaja S, et al., The Rise of Pregnancy Criminalization: A Pregnancy Justice Report 4 (Pregnancy Justice 2023); <https://www.pregnancyjusticeus.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/4-Key-Findings.pdf>.

¹² Wendy A. Bach & Madalyn K. Wasilczuk, Pregnancy as a Crime: A Preliminary Report on the First Year After Dobbs 9, 9-12 (Pregnancy Justice 2024); <https://www.pregnancyjusticeus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Pregnancy-as-a-Crime.pdf>.

¹³ Statement of Rep. Dave Weldon, M.D. (FL-15), *Introduction of The Vaccine Safety and Public Confidence Assurance Act of 2007*, (Apr. 19, 2007) https://childrenshealthdefense.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Weldon_Statement_Vaccine_Safety_final.pdf

¹⁴ David Weldon, Press Release: *Weldon, Maloney Introduce Vaccine Safety Bill*, VOTE SMART, (Apr. 19, 2007) <https://justfacts.votesmart.org/public-statement/254572/weldon-maloney-introduce-vaccine-safety-bill>

As director of the CDC, Weldon would play a significant part in reviewing and making recommendations about the use of vaccines. In this role and particularly working under Robert F. Kennedy Jr.—the newly-confirmed U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary who also has a long history¹⁵ of spreading anti-vaccine sentiments—David Weldon could make vaccines less accessible, increasing the spread of preventable infectious diseases. This would disproportionately impact Black and Brown communities, as they have lower vaccination rates compared to white communities due to various health inequity barriers.¹⁶ David Weldon’s record is alarming and makes clear that he is willing to put Americans’ health and lives at risk to further his anti-science ideology.

Public health in the U.S. is in a fragile state. We have already seen the politicization of the CDC result in erasure of critical health information from its website. Our country is navigating multiple public health crises, including increased spread of infectious diseases; exceptionally high maternal mortality rates, particularly for Black women;¹⁷ and the post-*Dobbs* landscape of abortion access, which forces one in five people to travel out of state to obtain care.¹⁸ We cannot afford to confirm a CDC Director who prioritizes personal ideology over public health.

For these reasons, we strongly urge you to oppose the confirmation of David Weldon for Director of the CDC. The health of our nation—and many of our global allies—depends on rational, independent leadership that prioritizes the health and rights of all individuals, free from political influence or ideological agendas.

Signed,

314 Action

Abortion Action Missouri

ACA Consumer Advocacy

Advocates for Youth

AIDS Foundation Chicago

AIDS Resource

All* in Action Fund

Alliance for Girls

American Atheists

American Humanist Association

Autistic Self Advocacy Network

CA LGBTQ Health and Human Services Network

Catholics for Choice

¹⁵ RFK Jr. Repro Letter of Concern (Jan. 28, 2025), <https://nwl.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/01/RFK-Jr.-Repro-Letter-of-Concern.pdf>.

¹⁶ Charleigh J. Granade, et al., *Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Adult Vaccination: A Review of the State of Evidence*, 6.1 Health Equity 206, 207 (2022); <http://online.liebertpub.com/doi/10.1089/heq.2021.0177>.

¹⁷ Wendy A. Bach & Madalyn K. Wasileczuk, *Pregnancy as a Crime: A Preliminary Report on the First Year After Dobbs 10* (Pregnancy Justice 2024); <https://www.pregnancyjusticeus.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/Pregnancy-as-a-Crime.pdf>.

¹⁸ Guttmacher, *New Data Show that Interstate Travel for Abortion Care in the United States Has Doubled Since 2020* (Dec. 7, 2023), <https://www.guttmacher.org/news-release/2023/new-data-show-interstate-travel-abortion-care-united-states-has-doubled-2020>.

Center for Biological Diversity
Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP)
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement and Research (CLEAR)
Center for Reproductive Rights
Clearinghouse on Women's Issues
Defend Public Health
Disability Rights Education and Defense Fund
Empowering Pacific Islander Communities (EPIC)
Equality California
Feminist Majority Foundation
Guttmacher Institute
If/When/How: Lawyering for Reproductive Justice
In Our Own Voice: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda
Indivisible
Jacobs Institute of Women's Health
Japanese American Citizens League
Legal Momentum, the Women's Legal Defense and Education Fund
Los Angeles LGBT Center
MomsRising
National Abortion Federation
National Asian Pacific American Families Allied for Substance Awareness and Harm Reduction
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum
National Consumers League
National Council of Asian Pacific Americans (NCAPA)
National Council of Jewish Women
National Health Law Program
National Institute for Reproductive Health
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Justice
National Network of Abortion Funds
National Organization for Women
National Partnership for Women & Families
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Political Caucus
NBJC
Nurses for America
OCA - Asian Pacific American Advocates
Ohio Nurses for America
Partners in Abortion Care
People For the American Way
People Power United

Physicians for Reproductive Health
Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Population Connection Action Fund
Positive Women's Network-USA
Power to Decide
Pregnancy Justice
Presente.org
Protect Our Care
Public Citizen
Pulmonary Hypertension Association
Rachel Carson Council
Reframe Health and Justice
Reproaction
Reproductive Freedom for All
Service Employees International Union (SEIU)
Sexual Violence Prevention Association (SVPA)
SIECUS: Sex Ed for Social Change
Silver State Equality
SisterReach, Inc. and SisterReach Illinois
SiX Action
South Asian Public Health Association (SAPHA)
The Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI)
The TransLatin@ Coalition
UltraViolet Action
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity
Voices of Health Care Action
Women Lawyers On Guard Action Network
Womxn From The Mountain
Woodhull Action Fund