



March 16, 2026

The Honorable Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Kennedy:

As members of the Democratic Women's Caucus and Reproductive Freedom Caucus, we write to express our grave concern with the Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) unnecessarily rushed Title X Family Planning Program (Title X) non-compete continuation application guidance, giving applicants merely one week to submit their application instead of the typical 90 days and jeopardizing Year 5 funding for the program. Title X is our nation's only federal program dedicated to family planning. This is only the latest in a string of attacks on Title X funding from the self-proclaimed "pro-family" Trump administration. **We call on HHS to immediately award a one-year full funding extension to all current Title X grantees as the funding process cannot be effectively executed before their funding runs out on March 31.**

In the notices of their awards, Title X grantees were told that non-compete continuation application guidance was required to be released by HHS no later than December 31, 2025. This guidance was just released on the evening of Friday, March 13—three months late.¹ With their Year 4 funding ending on March 31, HHS has rushed the process and given grantees only one week to apply for their Year 5 funding, which they need to continue serving their patients. Though grantees typically afforded 90 days to complete these applications, that is no longer an option with the extensive delay.

HHS's avoidable months-long delay is forcing Title X grantees to scramble to submit Year 5 applications by the end of the week. If any grantee is unable to receive their Year 5 funding because of HHS's pointless actions, the repercussions for critical health care could be incredibly damaging for their communities. For more than 50 years, Title X has served as a cornerstone of safety-net care. Title X-funded health centers are lifelines in their communities, providing high-quality family planning and sexual health care, including cancer screenings, testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, HIV testing, contraceptive services and supplies, pregnancy testing, and other essential health care services.

¹ Politico. (2026, March 13). *Birth control clinics rush to reapply for funding after receiving new Trump admin guidance*. <https://www.politico.com/news/2026/03/13/birth-control-clinics-rush-to-reapply-for-funding-after-receiving-new-trump-admin-guidance-00829179>

The bipartisan Title X program, championed by then-Congressman George H.W. Bush and signed into law by President Nixon, served 2.8 million people in 2023. For many of those patients, especially in rural and under-served communities, Title X health centers are their only source of health care. In 2023 alone, Title X supported 3,853 health centers across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and U.S. territories and performed 461,085 cervical cancer screenings.² These screenings have helped lower cervical cancer rates by more than half since the mid-1970s.³ In a time when maternal mortality rates are increasing in states across the country, we know that one-third of annual maternal deaths could be prevented if women had effective contraception,⁴ and nearly three quarters of women begin or continue a contraceptive method after going to a Title X-funded clinic.⁵ Timely access to the Year 5 funding of grants, already awarded, is essential for Title X clinics to continue to provide these screenings, contraceptive supplies, and other critical services.

The failure to release guidance and open applications on time is yet another example of this administration's ongoing assault on the Title X program, birth control, and reproductive health care access more broadly. In March 2025, HHS illegally withheld \$65.8 million in Congressionally appropriated funding for the Title X program from 16 grantees with grants in 23 states, threatening essential health care access for an estimated 842,000 people, or 30 percent of all Title X patients. Many of these affected grantees still struggle to sustain the financial burden caused by that extended delay in funding. The attacks on reproductive health care from this administration and congressional Republicans continued with an estimated 15 million Americans poised to lose health insurance under Trump's *One Big Beautiful Bill Act*, Republicans' failure to extend *Affordable Care Act* tax credits, and a budget proposal and partisan spending bill for FY2026 that sought to eliminate the Title X program entirely. The current reckless scramble to execute the Title X application process shows that, once again, HHS is willing to undermine the health and well-being of the 2.8 million Americans who utilize Title X services⁶ and is willing to let more women and families suffer in this continued Republican-led health care crisis.⁷

2 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Population Affairs. (2024, October). *2023 Title X family planning annual report: Title X providers continue to rebuild and grow*. <https://opa.hhs.gov/about/news/e-updates/2023-title-x-family-planning-annual-report-title-x-providers-continue-rebuild>.

3 American Cancer Society. (2026, January 14). *Key statistics for cervical cancer*. <https://www.cancer.org/cancer/types/cervical-cancer/about/key-statistics.html>.

4 Kaiser Family Foundation. (2024, January 2). *The U.S. government and international family planning and reproductive health efforts* [Fact sheet]. <https://www.kff.org/global-health-policy/the-u-s-government-and-international-family-planning-reproductive-health-efforts/>.

5 Guttmacher Institute. (2025, February). *Features and benefits of the Title X program* [Fact sheet]. <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/features-and-benefits-title-x-program>.

6 U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Population Affairs. (2024, October). *2023 Title X family planning annual report: Title X providers continue to rebuild*. <https://opa.hhs.gov/about/news/e-updates/2023-title-x-family-planning-annual-report-title-x-providers-continue-rebuild>.

7 U.S. House of Representatives, House Budget Committee Democrats. (2026, January 23). *The Trump-Republican cost of living crisis*. <https://democrats-budget.house.gov/legislation/costoflivingcrisis>.



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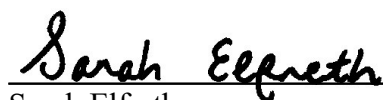
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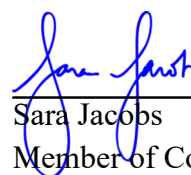
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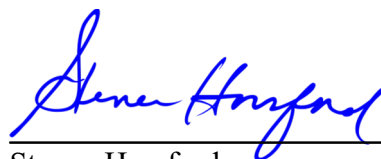
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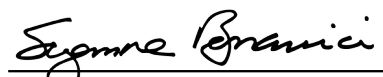
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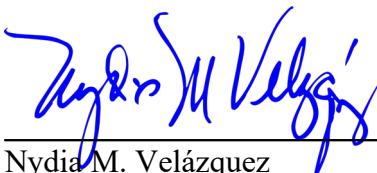
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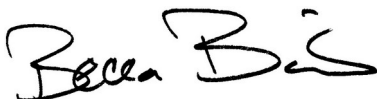
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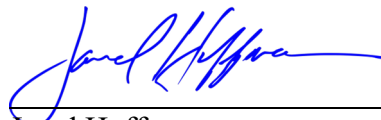
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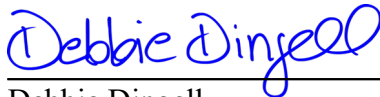
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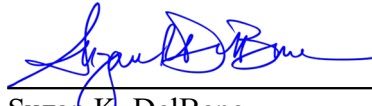
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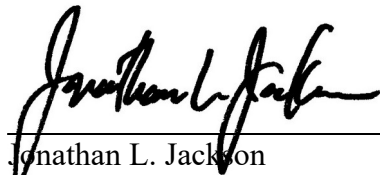
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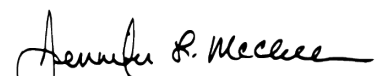
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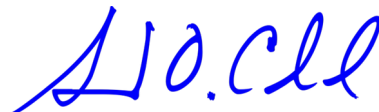
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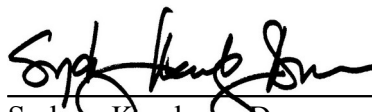
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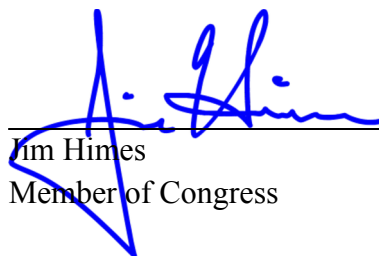
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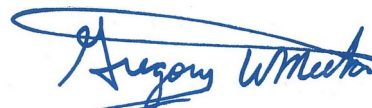
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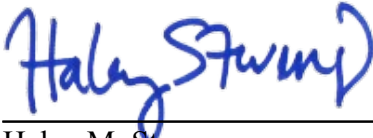
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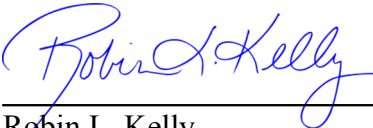
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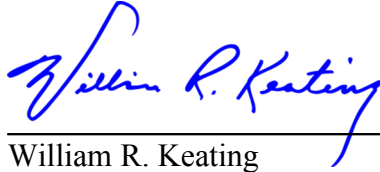
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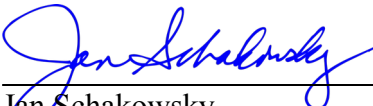
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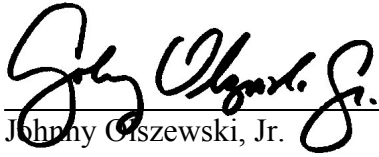
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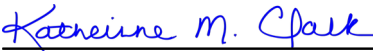
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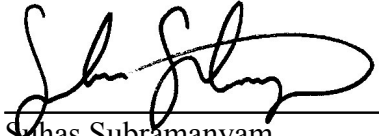
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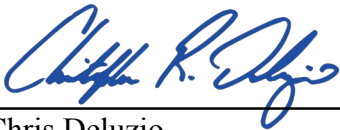
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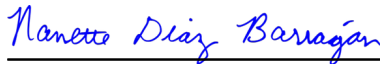
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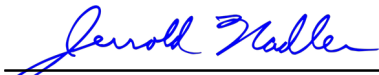
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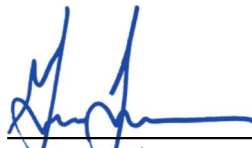
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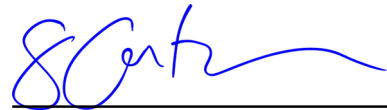
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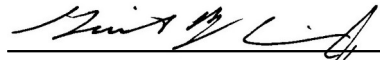
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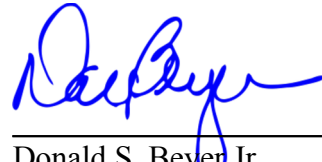
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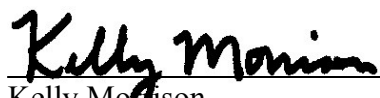
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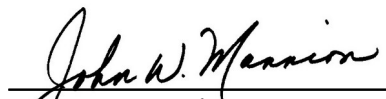
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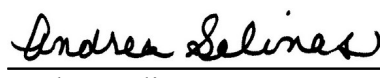
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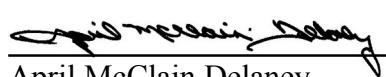
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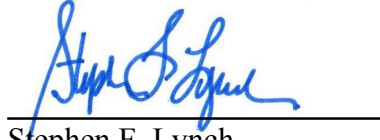
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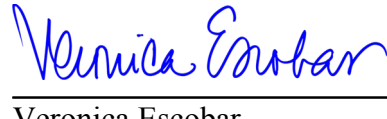
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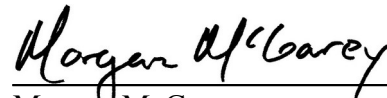
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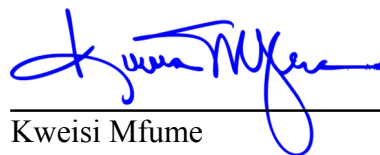
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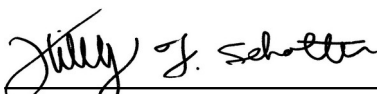
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