

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

March 28, 2025

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

The Honorable Brooke Rollins
Secretary
The U.S. Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250

Dear Secretary Kennedy, Jr. & Secretary Rollins:

We write to convey to you a desire to change the developmental process of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans (DGA). We are deeply concerned with the escalating public health crisis facing the United States, which is increasingly impacting our national security, military readiness, workforce capability, and most importantly the American people. The alarming rise in obesity, malnutrition, and chronic diseases—including childhood diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and so much more—underscores the urgent need for a more effective, transparent, and scientifically-based approach to federal nutrition policy, particularly the DGA.

Under the previous administration, on January 19, 2023—the Secretaries of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced their appointment of 20 scientists to serve on the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee (DGAC).¹ The committee is selected to review the latest scientific evidence on nutrition and health across all life stages. Through systematic reviews, food pattern modeling, and data analysis, the DGAC is to develop evidence-based review protocols, synthesize evidence, presents scientific findings, and consider public comments. Their comprehensive scientific report forms the basis for the DGA.

However, industry lobbyists from the food, beverage, and pharmaceutical sectors often seek to influence the guidelines for commercial interests.² These influences lead to conflicts of interest within the DGAC, as highlighted by recent evaluations showing that members have ties with industry groups, underscoring the need for transparent and comprehensive reporting.³ The USDA and HHS released partial public disclosures of conflicts of interest for the 2025 DGAC.⁴ These disclosures were voluntary, aggregated, and only covered by the previous year before selected, without identifying individual members' conflicts, making them insufficient while obscuring individual conflicts, highlighting the need for more transparent and comprehensive reporting.⁵ The U.S. Right to Know released a report in October of 2023 called “Full Disclosure – Assessing Conflicts of Interest of the 2025 Dietary Guidelines Advisory Committee.”⁶ This report aims to provide a fuller disclosure of conflicts of interests for the 2025 DGAC members, covering financial and other ties from the past 5 years.⁷ The data was compiled from publicly available sources.⁸

¹ See [https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2023/01/19/members-2025-dietary-guidelines-advisory-committee-announced#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20January%2019%2C%202023%20%E2%80%93,Guidelines%20Advisory%20Committee%20\(the%20Committee\)](https://www.usda.gov/about-usda/news/press-releases/2023/01/19/members-2025-dietary-guidelines-advisory-committee-announced#:~:text=WASHINGTON%2C%20January%2019%2C%202023%20%E2%80%93,Guidelines%20Advisory%20Committee%20(the%20Committee)) Last accessed on March 28, 2025

² See <https://usrtk.org/wp-content/uploads/dietary-guidelines-advisory-committee-conflicts-2023.pdf> Last Accessed on March 28, 2025

³ *Id.*

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

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For example, a member of the 2025 DGAC has received funding from a plant-based meat substitute company for research on the health effects of plant-based meat alternatives. This represents a clear conflict of interest, as it raises concerns about potential biases in the member's evaluation of plant-based foods versus animal-based foods.⁹ This issue becomes even more pronounced when looking at how these conflicts might affect broader research, such as the Food Compass—an influential nutrient profiling system developed by a major university and not only backed by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) but also funded by the NIH.¹⁰ The Food Compass claims to be “the most comprehensive and science-based nutrient profiling system to date”, yet it makes controversial comparisons, such as stating that cereal is twice as healthy as beef. These kinds of assessments call into question the integrity of the science behind such claims.¹¹

Thank you for your service and full and fair consideration of this important issue, consistent with applicable agency guidelines. We look forward to your response.

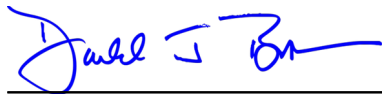
Sincerely,



Daniel Webster
Member of Congress



Andy Harris, M.D.
Member of Congress



Don Bacon
Member of Congress

⁹ *Id.*

¹⁰ See <https://learn.kettleandfire.com/blog/nih-funded-food-pyramid-rates-lucky-charms-healthier-than-steak> Last accessed on March 28, 2025

¹¹ *Id.*