

UNITED STATES

Department of  
Health and Human  
Services

STAFF ANALYSIS

# THE TRUMP ADMINISTRATION'S **PATTERN OF POLITICAL INTERFERENCE** IN THE NATION'S CORONAVIRUS RESPONSE



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The Select Subcommittee on the Coronavirus Crisis examined the Trump Administration's failed public health response to the coronavirus crisis, which has led to the deaths of more than 207,000 Americans. The analysis demonstrates that over the last eight months, the Administration engaged in a persistent pattern of political interference—repeatedly overruling and sidelining top scientists and undermining Americans' health to advance the President's partisan agenda.

The Administration's interference has occurred both in public view and in private, led by President Trump, Vice President Pence, White House officials, and political appointees at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and other agencies. The apparent goal of this unprecedented, coordinated attack on our nation's public health agencies during the pandemic was, in the President's words, to “play it down.”

**The Select Subcommittee documented at least 47 separate incidents of political interference in the Administration's coronavirus response spanning from February through September 2020.** These incidents have degraded every major facet of the Administration's public health response, including efforts to provide Americans access to testing and personal protective equipment (PPE), develop treatments and vaccines, and provide scientifically sound advice to the public on masks, social distancing, and other steps to stay safe.

As Election Day approaches, documented examples of political interference have increased, with at least 17 instances in August and September alone.

For example, political appointees have:

- **Pressured health experts to adopt the Administration's talking points**, even when they conflict with the science;
- **Criticized, sidelined, and fired experts** who insisted on sharing accurate scientific information with the public;
- **Altered, delayed, and suppressed guidance and scientific reports** on testing, protecting children, reopening schools, voting safely, and other topics;
- **Authorized questionable virus treatments** over the objections of scientists;
- **Resisted efforts to ensure the safe development of a vaccine**; and
- **Diverted \$265 million from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for an ad campaign** to “defeat despair and inspire hope” weeks before Election Day.

The Select Subcommittee's analysis is based on public reporting and the Subcommittee's investigations. It includes instances where the Administration actively interfered in the nation's public health response through executive action or public or private pressure. It does not capture each instance in which President Trump or his appointees downplayed the danger of the virus to the public, made false and misleading statements about the science, and misstated key facts about the Administration's response.

	Date	Political Interference
1.	February 20, 2020	<b>The Administration Ignores CDC Advice to Separate Infected Cruise Ship Passengers.</b> The <i>Washington Post</i> reports that following a coronavirus outbreak on the Diamond Princess cruise ship outside of Japan, a top Trump Administration official overruled CDC's recommendation to separate infected and non-infected passengers onto different flights. <sup>i</sup>
2.	February 25, 2020	<b>President Trump Threatens to Fire a CDC Official for Sharing Accurate Information.</b> Dr. Nancy Messonnier, Director of CDC's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, warned that the American public should "prepare with the expectation that this could be bad." <sup>ii</sup> The <i>Wall Street Journal</i> reports the comments prompted President Trump to call HHS Secretary Alex Azar threatening to fire Dr. Messonnier. Later that day, Secretary Azar tried to walk back Dr. Messonnier's statements. <sup>iii</sup>
3.	March – April 2020	<b>The White House Blocks a National Testing Plan Because "Blue States" Appear Most Impacted.</b> <i>Vanity Fair</i> reports that White House senior advisor Jared Kushner convened a working group at the White House in March and April that designed a national testing plan, but the Administration ultimately dropped the plan because political aides felt it was more advantageous to blame Democratic governors. <sup>iv</sup>
4.	March 5, 2020	<b>The Administration Delays a CDC Travel Alert.</b> <i>CNN</i> reports that CDC planned to post a global travel alert on March 5 that would have urged precautions for international travel anywhere in the world, but the Trump Administration delayed the alert by nearly a week. <sup>v</sup>
5.	March 7, 2020	<b>The Administration Overrules CDC Officials on a Travel Advisory for the Elderly.</b> The <i>Associated Press</i> reports that the White House overruled CDC officials who sought to recommend that the elderly and others more susceptible to the virus should avoid flying on commercial flights during the pandemic. While the Administration later suggested that vulnerable populations should consider not traveling, it resisted the stricter guidance proposed by CDC. <sup>vi</sup>
6.	March 9 – May 29, 2020	<b>The White House "Muzzled" CDC Briefings.</b> Following a March 9 briefing in which Dr. Messonnier accurately warned that coronavirus would rapidly spread in the United States, CDC stopped providing public briefings about the pandemic for more than two months. <i>CNN</i> reports that "CDC officials said they've been 'muzzled' and that their agency's efforts to mount a coordinated response to the Covid-19 pandemic were hamstrung by a White House whose decisions are driven by politics rather than science." <sup>vii</sup>

	Date	Political Interference
7.	March 19 – 21, 2020	<b>The White House Refuses to Coordinate Procurement and Distribution of PPE to Address Shortages.</b> As HHS’s Strategic National Stockpile was depleted of PPE in March, <sup>viii</sup> calls arose for the federal government to take a central role in procuring and distributing supplies. President Trump refused, saying on March 19 that the federal government is “not a shipping clerk.” <sup>ix</sup> <i>Vanity Fair</i> reports that, on March 21, Mr. Kushner rebuffed offers from private sector groups to help address supply problems, stating: “The federal government is not going to lead this response. It’s up to the states to figure out what they want to do.” Despite widespread concerns that states were bidding against each other for PPE and calls to invoke the Defense Production Act, Mr. Kushner said: “Free markets will solve this. That is not the role of government.” <sup>x</sup>
8.	April 2020	<b>The White House Quashes Plan to Have the Postal Service Send Masks to Every U.S. Household.</b> The White House blocked plans to send 650 million reusable masks to all U.S. households through the Postal Service in April, instead deciding to privately send masks to the private sector, schools, and other community organizations. An Administration official told the <i>Washington Post</i> this change was due to the “concern from some in the White House Domestic Policy Council and the Office of the Vice President that households receiving masks might create concern or panic.” <sup>xi</sup>
9.	April – May 2020	<b>President Trump Contradicted Experts and Pushed to Reopen the Economy Without a Plan to Stay Safe.</b> President Trump repeatedly pushed to reopen and lift shutdown orders—despite warnings from White House Coronavirus Task Force members Dr. Anthony Fauci and Dr. Deborah Birx that containment measures were still needed in hot spots. The <i>New York Times</i> reports that most states that started to reopen in early May did not meet the Task Force’s recommended criteria for reopening. <sup>xii</sup> In pushing to reopen, President Trump downplayed the risk from the virus, saying “People die from the flu. But we’ve never closed down the country for the flu.” <sup>xiii</sup> Bob Woodward later revealed that President Trump acknowledged privately on February 7 that the coronavirus was “more deadly than even your strenuous flus” and that “You just breathe the air and that’s how it’s passed.” <sup>xiv</sup>
10.	April 14, 2020	<b>The Administration Halts Funding to the World Health Organization (WHO).</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that the Administration halted funding to WHO, following President Trump’s criticism of the organization. Defunding WHO is counter to the pandemic preparedness plan the Trump Administration drafted in 2017, which advocated for “expanded international coordination on pandemic preparedness and response” and called for “continued support” for WHO. <sup>xv</sup>

	Date	Political Interference
11.	April 17 – 20, 2020	<b>President Trump Removes an HHS Official for Seeking Rigorous Vetting of a Potentially Dangerous Drug, Hydroxychloroquine.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that Dr. Rick Bright was ousted as Director of the Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority (BARDA) for refusing to push hydroxychloroquine. Dr. Bright stated that the Administration put “politics and cronyism ahead of science.” <sup>xvi</sup>
12.	April 21 – 22, 2020	<b>CDC Weakens Safety Protocols for Meat Processing Plants Following Intervention by the USDA Secretary.</b> <i>MSNBC</i> reports that following a meeting with Agriculture Secretary Sonny Purdue, CDC Director Robert Redfield’s office directed CDC staff to revise the language on its own coronavirus safety protocols for a South Dakota Smithfield meat processing plant to make the public health guidance appear as optional suggestions. <sup>xvii</sup>
13.	Early May 2020	<b>Administration Officials Shelve CDC Guidance on Safe Reopening.</b> The <i>Associated Press</i> reports that CDC intended to release its Guidance for Implementing the Opening Up America Again Framework on May 1, but the White House blocked them, calling the document “overly prescriptive.” CDC scientists were told the guidance “would never see the light of day” amid concerns from political appointees about damage to the economy. <sup>xviii</sup>
14.	May 2020	<b>Secretary Azar and Other HHS Officials Seek to Influence CDC Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports (MMWR).</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that Secretary Azar and other HHS political appointees believed an accurate CDC report about the spread of the coronavirus was “implying that the Trump administration moved too slowly to respond to the outbreak.” Around this time, HHS Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs Michael Caputo and his advisor, Dr. Paul Alexander, began pushing to influence CDC’s MMWRs. <sup>xix</sup>
15.	May 1, 2020	<b>The Administration Cancels National Institutes of Health (NIH) Grant for Coronavirus Research Due to Conspiracy Theory.</b> <i>ABC News</i> reports this grant existed for more than a decade and stems from the researchers’ partnership with Wuhan Institute of Virology. <sup>xx</sup> President Trump has claimed—without any evidence—that the coronavirus was created and released by this biomedical lab, despite statements to the contrary made by both Dr. Fauci and WHO. <sup>xxi</sup>
16.	May 6, 2020	<b>The White House Council of Economic Advisers Publicize a Misleading Projection of Deaths.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports the White House Council of Economic Advisers publicized a projections chart that suggested that Americans will stop dying of the coronavirus by the middle of May. Outside experts said the “dotted line in the chart could only mislead people into believing it was a forecast for a rapid decline in deaths.” <sup>xxii</sup>

	Date	Political Interference
17.	May 16, 2020	<b>HHS Hires Ex-Pharma Executives with Financial Interests in Vaccine Makers to Oversee Vaccine Development Process.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that by hiring Dr. Moncef Slaoui as an independent contractor, HHS let him maintain millions of dollars of pharmaceutical company securities. The Select Subcommittee's investigation shows that Dr. Slaoui and other Operation Warp Speed advisers maintained stock holdings that pose serious, unresolved conflicts of interest that could undermine the integrity of the Administration's vaccine development and review process. <sup>xxiii</sup>
18.	May 19, 2020	<b>The Administration Ignores Warnings About Mass Outbreaks at ICE Detention Centers.</b> <i>CNN</i> reports that the Administration was warned in March about the "imminent risk to the health and safety of immigrant detainees." <sup>xxiv</sup> A study conducted in late-April found that between 72% and 100% of detainees will be infected. However, the Administration refused to take recommended measures to protect the health of detainees. <sup>xxv</sup>
19.	May 23, 2020	<b>The White House Alters Guidance to Faith Communities.</b> The <i>Washington Post</i> reports that the White House removed CDC recommendations to limit practices that spread the virus, such as choir singing. Despite the evidence underlying CDC's initial recommendations, the White House and some members of the Task Force were reportedly "resistant to establishing limits on religious institutions" and "did not want to alienate the evangelical community." <sup>xxvi</sup>
20.	June 15, 2020	<b>The Administration Tells Governors to Repeat Misleading Claims About Outbreak.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports Vice President Pence encouraged governors to adopt the Administration's inaccurate claim that a recent increase in cases was due to increased testing. The Vice President went on to "encourage people with the news that we're safely reopening the country." At this time, many states were experiencing surges in cases. <sup>xxvii</sup>
21.	June 22, 2020	<b>CDC Weakens Its Mail-in Voting Guidance.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that CDC quietly changed its guidance on voting during the pandemic. As of March 9, 2020, CDC's elections website specifically recommended that election officials: "Encourage mail-in methods of voting if allowed in the jurisdiction." Around June 22, CDC updated its elections guidance, removing any mention of mail-in voting as a safer alternative to in-person voting and instead highlighting risks of mail-in voting. <sup>xxviii</sup>
22.	June 22, 2020	<b>The Administration Ends Funding for 13 Testing Sites.</b> After President Trump announced his intention to "slow the testing down" at a June 20 rally, the Administration announced on June 22 that its funding and support for 13 testing centers in Texas, Colorado, Illinois, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania would end on June 30. The Administration refused requests from local officials to open testing sites in hotspots, but later reversed course and kept a few sites in Texas open until the end of July. <sup>xxix</sup>

	Date	Political Interference
23.	June 23, 2020 – Present	<b>The White House Issues Secret Public Health Recommendations to States.</b> The Select Subcommittee’s investigation shows that the Task Force sent private reports to state and local governments warning about surges in new coronavirus infections and making recommendations to improve states’ responses to the pandemic. The White House has refused to publicly support many of these private recommendations, including requiring face masks, closing bars and gyms, and strictly limiting gatherings. <sup>xxx</sup>
24.	June 28, 2020	<b>The Administration Pressures CDC to Downplay Risks to Pregnant Women.</b> The <i>Washington Post</i> reports that Dr. Alexander wrote an email to Director Redfield accusing CDC of “undermining the President” by putting out an accurate report warning about the potential risks to pregnant women from the coronavirus. The email noted that the guidance “reads in a way to frighten women ... as if the President and his administration can’t fix this and it is getting worse.” <sup>xxxii</sup>
25.	June 30, 2020	<b>Political Appointees Target Top CDC Scientist Following an Interview.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that Dr. Alexander emailed Mr. Caputo a scathing critique of scientifically accurate statements about the coronavirus made by CDC Principal Deputy Director Anne Schuchat during an interview. Dr. Alexander accused Dr. Schuchat of trying to “embarrass the President here” and claimed that “It is very false her statement that it causes death in children.” <sup>xxxiii</sup>
26.	Early July 2020	<b>The Administration Attacks Dr. Fauci for Sharing Contrary Views on Reopening.</b> <i>CNN</i> reports that the White House made a concerted effort to discredit Dr. Fauci after he expressed concerns over reopening the country amid a national surge in coronavirus cases. “One senior administration official told <i>CNN</i> that some officials within the White House do not trust Fauci. According to the source, those officials think Fauci doesn’t have the best interest of the President.” <sup>xxxiii</sup> After President Trump claimed Dr. Fauci “made a lot of mistakes,” Assistant to the President Peter Navarro, who has no public health expertise, published an op-ed in <i>USA Today</i> stating that Dr. Fauci “has been wrong about everything I have interacted with him on.” <sup>xxxiv</sup>
27.	July 2020	<b>President Trump Overrules CDC on School Reopening Guidance.</b> President Trump pushed for schools to fully reopen, even though CDC guidance warned that “Full sized, in-person classes” presented the “Highest Risk” of transmitting coronavirus to students, teachers, and community members. <sup>xxxv</sup> CDC then issued revised guidelines that were “substantially edited by White House officials” and included misleading language downplaying the risks, over the objection of CDC scientists. <sup>xxxvi</sup> Senior White House staff, including Mark Meadows, Mr. Kushner, Larry Kudlow, and Stephen Miller, were involved in the review process. <sup>xxxvii</sup>

	Date	Political Interference
28.	July – August 2020	<b>President Trump Pressures FDA to Review Oleandrin as a Potential Coronavirus Treatment.</b> <i>Axios</i> reports that President Trump pressured FDA to review the unproven botanical extract as a potential coronavirus cure, after a meeting with Phoenix Biotechnology Vice Chairman Andrew Whitney arranged by My Pillow founder and CEO Mike Lindrell, a supporter of President Trump’s campaign. <sup>xxxviii</sup>
29.	July – August 2020	<b>The Administration Installs Partisans in Nonpolitical FDA Posts.</b> <i>Stat News</i> reports that President Trump installed a number of political operatives—some lacking scientific backgrounds—to key positions at FDA that are typically filled by nonpolitical civil servants. <sup>xxxix</sup>
30.	July 10, 2020	<b>The Administration Redirects Hospitalization Data Away from CDC.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that the Administration abruptly directed hospitals across the country to stop sending data on coronavirus hospitalizations to the CDC platform that hospitals had used to report data for over a decade, and instead to report the data directly to HHS through a new portal maintained by a private company. <sup>xl</sup> Dr. Redfield testified to the Select Subcommittee that he “wasn’t involved in the decision” to transfer the data away from CDC and that “the Secretary’s office made the decision.” <sup>xli</sup>
31.	August – September 2020	<b>Administration Officials Delay Accurate Article on Hydroxychloroquine in CDC’s MMWR.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports Mr. Caputo’s team tried to halt the release of a CDC report that found “the potential benefits of [hydroxychloroquine] do not outweigh their risks.” The article was held for about a month after Mr. Caputo’s team raised questions about its authors’ political leanings, but it was finally released on September 4. <sup>xlii</sup>
32.	August – September 2020	<b>The Administration Pressures Dr. Fauci to Echo Administration Talking Points on Children and the Coronavirus.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that Dr. Alexander repeatedly attempted to pressure Dr. Fauci and other NIH officials to adopt the Administration’s talking points. On August 27, Dr. Alexander made clear that he objected to Dr. Fauci’s planned interview responses, stating: “I continue to have an issue with kids getting tested and repeatedly and even university students in a widespread manner...and I disagree with Dr. Fauci on this. Vehemently.” On September 8, Dr. Alexander asked, “Can you ensure Dr. Fauci indicates masks are for the teachers in schools. Not for children.” <sup>xliii</sup>
33.	August 2, 2020	<b>The White House Exerts Political Pressure to Finish Vaccine Before Election Day.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that Mr. Kushner directly pressured Secretary Azar to accelerate the vaccine development process, and that the White House insisted on the production of a vaccine by October 2020, prior to Election Day. <sup>xliv</sup>



	Date	Political Interference
34.	August 8, 2020	<b>An HHS Political Appointee Demands CDC Alter or Retract Scientific Articles on Children.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that Dr. Alexander demanded that CDC Director Redfield change two published reports that Dr. Alexander claimed inflated coronavirus risks to children and undermined President Trump's push to reopen schools. Dr. Alexander called on CDC to insert new language in a report or "pull it down and stop all reports immediately." He also wrote: "CDC tried to report as if once kids get together, there will be spread and this will impact school re-opening. .... Very misleading by CDC and shame on them. Their aim is clear. ... This is designed to hurt this President for their reasons which I am not interested in." <sup>xlv</sup>
35.	August 8, 2020	<b>An HHS Political Appointee Demands Changes to MMWR Publication Process to Allow for Political Interference.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that Dr. Alexander called on CDC Director Redfield to put an "immediate stop" to all new MMWR reports, so that the agency could change its publication process to allow for Dr. Alexander to personally review the report before publication. Dr. Alexander stated, "The reports must be read by someone outside of CDC like myself, and we cannot allow the reporting to go on as it has been, for it is outrageous. Its lunacy. Nothing to go out unless I read and agree with the findings how they CDC, wrote it and I tweak it to ensure it is fair and balanced and 'complete.'" <sup>xlvi</sup>
36.	August 23, 2020	<b>FDA Grants an Emergency Use Authorization (EUA) for Plasma Over the Objections of Top Scientists, While Citing Misleading Evidence.</b> <i>The New York Times</i> and <i>Washington Post</i> report that the EUA for convalescent plasma occurred over the objections of Dr. Fauci and NIH Director Francis Collins, who believed insufficient data was available to determine if convalescent plasma provided a benefit. <sup>xlvii</sup> FDA's EUA qualified the preliminary findings regarding convalescent plasma and called for clinical trials. <sup>xlviii</sup> FDA rushed the EUA over objections to appease President Trump, who had expressed frustration that FDA was not moving quickly enough to develop coronavirus treatments. FDA Commissioner Stephen Hahn was later forced to apologize, and the FDA's chief spokesperson was removed after it became clear that Dr. Hahn, along with President Trump and Secretary Azar, cited grossly inaccurate statistics on the effectiveness of plasma therapy at a press conference. <sup>xlix</sup>
37.	August 24, 2020	<b>The Administration Alters CDC Testing Guidelines.</b> CDC abruptly changed its testing guidelines to assert, contrary to the scientific consensus, that most asymptomatic individuals exposed to a person with the virus do not need to be tested. <i>CNN</i> asked a senior CDC official whether this change was made at the direction of the White House or HHS, and the official stated, "It's coming from the top down." <sup>1</sup> CDC's original guidance was later restored after the Select Subcommittee and others objected.

	Date	Political Interference
38.	August 24, 2020	<b>President Trump Accuses the “Deep State” FDA of Slowing Vaccine Trials Until After Election.</b> After repeatedly suggesting that a coronavirus vaccine may be released before Election Day, President Trump pressured FDA Commissioner Hahn to deliver, tweeting: “The deep state, or whoever, over at the FDA is making it very difficult for drug companies to get people in order to test the vaccines and therapeutics. Obviously, they are hoping to delay the answer until after November 3rd. Must focus on speed, and saving lives! @SteveFDA” <sup>li</sup>
39.	August 28, 2020	<b>HHS Cancels Contract of Consultant Who Advised FDA to Correct Misleading Statements.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that HHS canceled the contract of consultant Wayne Pines after he advised FDA Commissioner Hahn to correct misleading statements made regarding the effectiveness of plasma therapy. HHS officials were reportedly angered by Dr. Hahn’s apology and began the process of severing Mr. Pines’ contract after learning that he aided the decision, with one official stating that Mr. Pines’ removal was “not routine.” <sup>lii</sup>
40.	August 31, 2020	<b>The Administration Redirects \$265 million from CDC and FDA Budgets for a “Boondoggle” PR Campaign to “Defeat Despair” Before Election.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports the ad campaign—which Mr. Caputo said was directly ordered by President Trump—sought to release an ad blitz before Election Day featuring senior Administration officials and celebrities and highlighting the Administration’s pandemic response. <sup>liii</sup> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that CDC was not been consulted on the substance of the campaign. <sup>liv</sup> HHS directed a subcontract to a former business partner of Mr. Caputo. An HHS official called the effort a “boondoggle.” <sup>lv</sup>
41.	Late August 2020	<b>HHS Overrides FDA and Increases the Risk of Inaccurate Coronavirus Tests Flooding the Market.</b> <i>Politico</i> reports that Secretary Azar overruled objections from FDA Commissioner Hahn to revoke the FDA’s ability to check the quality of tests developed by labs for their own use. The decision removed safeguards designed to prevent inaccurate tests from flooding the market during a public health crisis. A former HHS official told <i>Politico</i> that, “I’ve never seen such a complete political overruling of the agency.” <sup>lvi</sup>
42.	September 2, 2020	<b>President Trump Undermines FDA Independence on Vaccine Approval.</b> FDA announced guidelines to be followed before authorizing a vaccine-related EUA, including a minimum two-month period after a clinical trial and five cases of severe coronavirus in the placebo group. President Trump rejected the FDA’s attempt to implement a rigorous vaccine approval process, asserting without evidence that the plan “sounds like a political move” and that it “has to be approved by the White House. We may or may not approve it.” <sup>lvii</sup>

	<b>Date</b>	<b>Political Interference</b>
43.	September 6, 2020	<b>The White House Weakens Task Force Public Health Recommendations.</b> After months of recommending that states with active outbreaks implement mask mandates, close bars and gyms, and strictly limit gatherings, an analysis by the Select Subcommittee shows the Task Force weakened its recommendations in states where the virus is still spreading rapidly. <sup>lviii</sup>
44.	September 15, 2020	<b>Secretary Azar Restricts the Authority of FDA and Other Health Agencies.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that Secretary Azar signed a memorandum prohibiting FDA and other health agencies from signing any new rules regarding medicines, medical devices, and other products, writing that the power to do so “is reserved to the Secretary.” It is unclear what Secretary Azar intends to do with this power, but experts have raised alarm that the change could impact vaccines and therapeutics. <sup>lix</sup>
45.	September 16, 2020	<b>President Trump Publicly Rebukes Dr. Redfield on Mask and Vaccine Effectiveness.</b> The <i>New York Times</i> reports that President Trump publicly rebuked Dr. Redfield after he provided scientifically accurate testimony that a vaccine would not be widely available until Summer 2021 or later and that face masks are “more guaranteed” to protect against the coronavirus than a vaccine. President Trump stated that Dr. Redfield’s comments contained “incorrect information.” Subsequently, Dr. Redfield and CDC issued statements walking back Dr. Redfield’s testimony to more closely align with the President’s views. <sup>lx</sup>
46.	September 21, 2020	<b>The Administration Removed a Report on Airborne Transmission from the CDC Website.</b> On Friday, September 18, new guidance appeared on CDC’s website concluding that the coronavirus is transmitted through small particles in the air. By Monday, September 21, this guidance was removed. The sudden appearance and disappearance of scientific information has raised concerns that officials may have found the conclusions politically inconvenient. <sup>lxi</sup>
47.	September 29, 2020	<b>The Vice President Overrules the CDC Director on Extending Cruise Ship Ban.</b> <i>Axios</i> reports that CDC Director Redfield was overruled by Vice President Pence when he pushed to extend a no-sail order on passenger cruises until February 2021: “Public health officials have privately complained that the thwarting of Redfield on the cruise ship ban is politically motivated because the industry is a major economic presence in Florida—a key battleground state where the polls are statistically tied.” <sup>lxii</sup>

## ENDNOTES

<sup>i</sup> *Coronavirus-Infected Americans Flown Home Against CDC's Advice*, Washington Post (Feb. 20, 2020) (online at [www.washingtonpost.com/health/coronavirus-diamond-princess-cruise-americans/2020/02/20/b6f54cae-5279-11ea-b119-4faabac6674f\\_story.html](http://www.washingtonpost.com/health/coronavirus-diamond-princess-cruise-americans/2020/02/20/b6f54cae-5279-11ea-b119-4faabac6674f_story.html)).

<sup>ii</sup> *Health Officials Warn Americans to Plan for the Spread of Coronavirus in U.S.*, National Public Radio (Feb. 25, 2020) (online at [www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/02/25/809318447/health-officials-warn-americans-to-start-planning-for-spread-of-coronavirus-in-u](http://www.npr.org/sections/health-shots/2020/02/25/809318447/health-officials-warn-americans-to-start-planning-for-spread-of-coronavirus-in-u)).

<sup>iii</sup> *Health Chief's Early Missteps Set Back Coronavirus Response*, Wall Street Journal (Apr. 22, 2020) (online at [www.wsj.com/articles/health-chiefs-early-missteps-set-back-coronavirus-response-11587570514](http://www.wsj.com/articles/health-chiefs-early-missteps-set-back-coronavirus-response-11587570514)).

<sup>iv</sup> *How Jared Kushner's Secret Testing Plan "Went Poof into Thin Air,"* Vanity Fair (July 30, 2020) (online at [www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/07/how-jared-kushners-secret-testing-plan-went-poof-into-thin-air](http://www.vanityfair.com/news/2020/07/how-jared-kushners-secret-testing-plan-went-poof-into-thin-air)).

<sup>v</sup> *'We've Been Muzzled': CDC Sources Say White House Putting Politics Ahead of Science*, CNN (May 20, 2020) (online at [www.cnn.com/2020/05/20/politics/coronavirus-travel-alert-cdc-white-house-tensions-invs/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/05/20/politics/coronavirus-travel-alert-cdc-white-house-tensions-invs/index.html)).

<sup>vi</sup> *Official: White House Didn't Want to Tell Seniors Not to Fly*, Associated Press (Mar. 7, 2020) (online at [apnews.com/article/921ad7f1f08d7634bf681ba785faf269](http://apnews.com/article/921ad7f1f08d7634bf681ba785faf269)).

<sup>vii</sup> *CDC to Resume Regular Coronavirus Briefings After Being Sidelined by White House*, CNN (May 30, 2020) (online at [www.cnn.com/2020/05/30/politics/cdc-coronavirus-briefings-resume/index.html](http://www.cnn.com/2020/05/30/politics/cdc-coronavirus-briefings-resume/index.html)).

<sup>viii</sup> Committee on Oversight and Reform, *Press Release: New Document Shows Inadequate Distribution of Personal Protective Equipment and Critical Medical Supplies to States* (Apr. 8, 2020) (online at [oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/new-document-shows-inadequate-distribution-of-personal-protective-equipment-and](http://oversight.house.gov/news/press-releases/new-document-shows-inadequate-distribution-of-personal-protective-equipment-and)).

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