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NEW REPORT

MAHA Betrayed: Trump, RFK Jr. Keep Selling Out Movement to Corporate Polluters and Poison Peddlers

Summary: For over a year, Donald Trump and his Health Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. promised the Make America Healthy Again movement that this administration would finally take on Big Food, Big Ag, and Big Chemical. Instead, they have delivered a steady diet of broken promises, corporate quid pro quos, and foodborne illnesses. The result: RFK Jr.'s approval is stuck in the thirties ([37%](#)), public trust in federal health information has cratered to the teens ([16%](#)), food-borne illness outbreaks are spreading, and even MAHA's own base is starting to ask what, exactly, they got for their vote. RFK Jr. can keep promising MAHA the moon at every podium and convention speech. But a year into his tenure, the receipts tell a different story: cancer-linked chemicals back on the market, food safety agencies gutted, families paying more for groceries, and even the movement's founders wondering whether they've been put out to political pasture.

CHEMICALS & PESTICIDES

Bringing Back Cancer-Linked Glyphosate: In February, over MAHA objections, Secretary Kennedy [unequivocally endorsed](#) Trump's executive order invoking the Defense Production Act to restore production of glyphosate, the key ingredient in Roundup herbicide repeatedly linked to cancer. [On June 25th](#), in *Monsanto Company v. Durnell*, the Supreme Court [ruled in favor of industry and the Trump administration](#), effectively shielding chemical manufacturers from liability for [cancer-linked](#) glyphosate — over MAHA leaders' vocal [opposition](#), and with Trump's own Justice Department filing [an amicus brief](#) backing Bayer-owned Monsanto in court.

Atrazine Pesticide Rug Pull: Last year, RFK Jr. [made bold promises to MAHA moms](#) to restrict atrazine, a pesticide linked to cancer, birth defects, and low sperm counts. A year later, the Trump U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [released a 'review' concluding](#) atrazine poses no extinction risk to threatened or endangered species, which ["effectively paves the way for continued use,"](#) and continued profits for Trump's chemical industry donors.

Scrapping Limits on 'Forever Chemicals' in Drinking Water. RFK was a [longtime critic](#) of PFAS 'forever chemicals' in drinking water — [chemicals](#) that “have been linked to cancer, immune system problems and infertility.” Kennedy's betrayal started on day one. In April 2025, the Trump administration [quietly moved to reverse bans on PFAS forever chemicals](#). By May 2025, the EPA announced it would [roll back Biden-era drinking water limits](#) on PFAS. Then in November, the EPA [approved two new PFAS-containing pesticides for use on vegetables](#) and announced plans to further weaken PFAS reporting requirements — not just allowing existing forever chemicals but actively introducing new ones into the food supply. The final blow came in May 2026, when RFK Jr. personally [announced a](#)

[major rollback](#) of Biden-era restrictions on PFAS. The deregulation is a major gift to chemical [industry mega-donors](#) including DuPont, part of a [\\$2 billion PFAS settlement](#) last year, which gave [\\$250,000](#) to Trump's campaign after the 2024 election.

Kennedy Stays Silent While EPA Betrays MAHA on Toxic Chemicals. While MAHA leaders have [spoken out](#) about air and water pollutants, Trump's EPA has now [shut down](#) plans to release a MAHA agenda and the NIH has [stopped accepting](#) submissions for its flagship journal on environmental health and yanked research grants.. EPA scientists were [pressured](#) to alter safety reviews of chemicals in household cleaners and cosmetics to make risks appear less serious than the data shows — [white-washing health risks](#) of the products MAHA's core constituency was promised would be regulated. At a chemicals summit, [Kennedy praised](#) an Oregon State researcher's microplastics study from the podium — unaware, or unbothered, that an hour earlier she'd learned EPA had just terminated the grant funding that research. Kennedy has [stayed similarly silent](#) as EPA rolls back the very mercury rules he spent decades fighting for. As [an environmental attorney](#), he sued over mercury pollution and personally developed “word retrieval and memory problems” from mercury-tainted fish. EPA announced its rollback of mercury emissions rules the day after the MAHA Commission, which Kennedy and Zeldin both sit on, held its first meeting. A recent [report](#) from Climate Power and Protect Our Care details how Trump has eliminated 31 pollution protections that, together, were set to deliver \$275 billion in benefits per year and prevent 30,000 deaths annually.

FOOD AND TOBACCO INDUSTRY CAPTURE

All Talk on Synthetic Food Dyes. More than a year after Kennedy's high-profile [announcement](#) of a food dye ‘phase-out,’ [the FDA has not introduced](#) the regulatory documents needed to establish a safety case against the dyes, and the agency's own timeline has [quietly slipped a full year](#), from [the end of 2026](#) to the end of 2027. Major food companies including Coca-Cola, Mondelez, and Unilever [have made no concrete commitments](#), and no drug companies have pledged to remove dyes from medications.

All Talk on Ultra-Processed Foods, Too. In March, Kennedy drafted a [letter to the White House](#) praising a citizen petition from former FDA Commissioner David Kessler and calling on food companies to produce safety studies proving common ultra-processed ingredients like high-fructose corn syrup and refined flours don't contribute to chronic disease. Food experts called it a potentially historic opening to force industry reformulation. Six months later, nothing has happened: the letter is still sitting at the White House, a companion effort to formally define “ultra-processed foods” was delayed at the last minute after reaching final review, and food industry groups — who have publicly opposed the

new definition as confusing and costly — have spent the intervening weeks in “formal meetings” with the same White House and health officials sitting on Kennedy’s request.

Big Tobacco Buys Access at Every Level – And Now We Have Poisonous Flavored Vapes For Kids And “Healthy” Zyn Products. In May, RFK Jr. [dutifully followed](#) Trump’s [order to push FDA Commissioner Marty Makary out the door](#) for not moving fast enough to approve flavored vapes and nicotine products — [a major no-no for MAHA](#) leaders — after [a \\$5 million big tobacco check](#) to a Trump SuperPAC and a [fancy golf course luncheon between Trump and big tobacco/vape lobbyists](#). Kennedy’s FDA then [authorized Zyn nicotine pouches](#) to be marketed on their health benefits — around the same time [Trump’s own stock holdings](#) in Zyn maker Philip Morris grew to as much as \$1.64 million. A former FDA toxicologist later [revealed](#) the agency approved Zyn [without even reviewing its potential for microplastics exposure](#). Meanwhile, HHS’s mass layoffs gutted CDC’s Office on Smoking and Health — cuts one former director called [the greatest gift to the tobacco industry in the last half-century](#) — and the FDA [fired its entire tobacco enforcement team](#), then scrambled to beg them back after realizing enforcement against retailers selling to minors had completely stopped.

The Kratom Quid Pro Quo. Kennedy personally [pressured Ohio’s governor](#) to abandon a state ban on kratom — a controversial addictive substance linked to thousands of deaths — on behalf of an ex-con manufacturer who subsequently funneled \$1 million to a pro-Trump PAC. The administration then [delivered a formal regulatory win](#) to its kratom allies. In another case, [Trump’s DOJ dismissed](#) its case against a kratom manufacturer in December 2025, just 12 days after that company’s leadership made significant donations to Trump-aligned groups. The Senate Finance Committee [has since opened an investigation](#) into whether Kennedy’s HHS softened both kratom and tobacco policies in exchange for industry donations.

RFK’s Food Pyramid — Built by Beef and Dairy Insiders, Costing Families \$1,000 a Year: Kennedy unveiled his new dietary guidelines by attacking the “corporate-driven assumptions” of past recommendations, while FDA Commissioner Marty Makary blasted the old “corrupt food pyramid.” But the [panel that shaped the new one](#) was riddled with undisclosed-until-now industry ties: at least four of the nine panelists had recent financial relationships with beef or dairy groups. The National Cattlemen’s Beef Association, General Mills, and the National Dairy Council all turn up in the committee’s disclosures. Even the alcohol lobby successfully [watered down the guidelines’ alcohol recommendations](#) through a systematic lobbying campaign that exploited the chaos of the process. [And the beef-and-dairy-heavy pyramid comes at a real cost: a market analysis released](#) in April found the new guidelines would raise annual grocery bills by nearly a third, or \$1,012 more per year, for families trying to follow

them — while grocery prices remain [2.7 percent higher](#) than a year ago, beef prices sit [at record levels](#), and fruit and vegetable prices are up [more than 5 percent](#).

Food Industry Buys a Friendlier FDA, Americans Spend Months Dodging Lettuce. Six days after the FDA announced a 30-month delay in enforcing the Food Traceability Rule — the recordkeeping standard designed to help investigators trace contaminated food back to its source fast — [Taylor Farms’ parent company cut a \\$1 million check](#) to Trump’s super PAC, MAGA Inc., followed by another \$1.2 million combined to GOP-aligned super PACs over the next year. Fourteen months later, lettuce from that same company would be linked to this summer’s [record-breaking](#) cyclosporiasis outbreak, which would go on to sicken thousands, hospitalize hundreds, and kill two. Asked in mid-July whether the outbreak might scare people away from the healthy foods MAHA recommends, Kennedy said knowing the risk would make it “much easier for people to make healthy choices” while the death toll and case count kept climbing.

BROKEN PROMISE: “END THE CORRUPTION, END THE CORPORATE CAPTURE”

Kennedy Promised To “End The Corporate Capture,” But He Dines With Big Pharma At Mar-A-Lago. At his swearing-in as HHS Secretary, Kennedy [vowed to “end the corruption, end the corporate capture”](#) of the agency by Big Pharma. Despite that vow, within days of his announcement as HHS Secretary, a Super-PAC backing Kennedy [was charging \\$25,000-per-person](#) for cocktails and dinner with him at Mar-a-Lago. Before being sworn in, Kennedy [attended multiple “million-dollar” dinners](#) with Big Pharma executives at Mar-A-Lago — including Pfizer’s CEO, whose company gave \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural committee. Meanwhile, Kennedy’s [promise to ban pharmaceutical ads on TV](#) has gone nowhere: nearly two years later, no ban has been proposed, and drug ad spending has only continued to climb.

“This Is Complete Corporate Capture”: MAHA Summit Sells \$300,000 Dinners With Kennedy to Companies HHS Regulates. Ahead of a September 2026 summit, [MAHA Center](#) — a nonprofit run by Kennedy’s longtime book publisher Tony Lyons — circulated a sponsorship menu to companies and consultants; the top tier, \$300,000, guaranteed a speaking slot and a [private dinner](#) with Kennedy and CMS Administrator Mehmet Oz. Sponsors include Walmart, health insurers UnitedHealth and Elevance, psychedelics companies awaiting FDA drug approval and AI giants OpenAI and Anthropic. The [clearest conflict](#) is [cancer-screening company Grail](#): it’s sponsoring the summit the same week its multi-cancer blood test, which [performed poorly in two large studies](#), faces an FDA advisory panel vote. Kennedy has [privately told aides](#) he wants the panel to recommend it. A government ethics watchdog

said it “certainly doesn’t seem appropriate” for officials to attend an event marketed to companies with business before the agency. Even longtime MAHA grassroots organizers are outraged: “This is the opposite of going against corporate capture. This is complete corporate capture,” said Kennedy campaign volunteer Scarlett Fang. A *Politico* review found nearly 90% of MAHA PAC’s donations came from just 10 entities — half with ties to the drug industry.

Kennedy Pockets Over \$250,000 in Free Flights and Gifts From Megadonor. Kennedy’s most recent financial disclosure [reveals](#) he accepted more than \$250,000 in gifts from security consultant and major 2024 donor Gavin de Becker — including nearly \$45,000 in round-trip flights to Greece and almost \$97,000 to Fiji, where de Becker owns a private compound, plus use of a D.C. vacation home. He also disclosed a private flight to Aspen from Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick and WWE box seats from Education Secretary Linda McMahon — on top of \$4 million in [book advances](#) from Skyhorse Publishing, run by the same Tony Lyons bankrolling the MAHA movement’s summit and PAC.

Kennedy’s Wife Was Paid \$210,000 By Tony Lyons’ MAHA Anti-Vaccine Lobbying Group, Triggering Formal Ethics Complaint. Cheryl Hines, Kennedy’s wife, accepted a \$210,000 consulting payment for her production company from MAHA Action, the Tony Lyons-led nonprofit that lobbies for legislation to end liability protection for vaccine makers. [Campaign Legal Center filed a formal complaint](#) with the HHS Inspector General alleging the arrangement may violate criminal conflict-of-interest law, since Kennedy’s ethics agreement explicitly pledged he would not participate in matters that could financially benefit her company. [A former Bush White House ethics counsel said the payments](#) “reeks of conflict of interest” and “could appear to be a bribe.”

The Revolving Door Spins Faster, Not Slower. Kennedy [installed pharmaceutical executive George Tidmarsh](#) to run the FDA’s powerful drug-review center, while former FDA drug chief Patrizia Cavazoni left the agency and rejoined Pfizer within months — the exact “revolving door” Kennedy vowed to close. STAT reported that [the revolving door was spinning faster, not slower](#), with scores of FDA drug reviewers fleeing to industry jobs and former commissioner Scott Gottlieb estimating up to 600 staff had recused themselves from drug approvals involving their former employers. Rather than target industry influence, Kennedy’s HHS restructuring [cut roughly 3,500 FDA employees](#) — nearly 20% of the agency’s workforce.

Kennedy’s Ethics “Fix” Was a Sham — He Redirected Vaccine Lawsuit Profits Back to His Old Law Firm. Facing conflict-of-interest concerns during his confirmation, Kennedy pledged to divest his financial stake in vaccine-injury lawsuits he’d brought against HPV vaccine Gardasil’s manufactur-

er before joining government, agreeing to transfer it to his adult son. [Democratic senators say](#) they've since learned Kennedy instead quietly assigned that stake to his former employer, the personal injury firm Wisner Baum — where his son Conor now works — without disclosing the change to Congress. The conflict is direct: Wisner Baum's payout from those cases depends on vaccine-injury litigation and policy that Kennedy, as HHS Secretary, now has direct authority over.

Industry Cashes In Across the Board. [Healthcare industry lobbying spending jumped](#) by more than \$100 million from 2024 to 2025 — a sign, as [one analysis put it](#), that industry insiders “are not frightened by these changes. They are capitalizing on them.”

CRACKS IN THE MAHA COALITION: EVEN THE WOMEN WHO BUILT THE MOVEMENT ARE GETTING SIDELINED

‘Manly MAHA’: Protein and Testosterone Push Out The MAHA Mom Agenda. [MAHA was built by women](#) — the moms and influencers who evangelized for whole foods on Instagram, pushed Trump to install Kennedy at HHS, and organized against glyphosate and food additives. A year in, power inside the administration has consolidated almost entirely among men: RFK Jr., Dr. Mehmet Oz, Dr. Jay Bhattacharya hold top health posts, and four of the first five “MAHA goal” agency leaders HHS announced were men. From a Super Bowl ad featuring Mike Tyson tearing into a carrot to a video of Kennedy and Kid Rock exercising shirtless and pounding milk in a hot tub, MAHA's public face has shifted toward protein and testosterone culture. Kennedy's “masculine” diet of nothing but meat and fermented foods has reportedly been embraced by MAGA men Vice President JD Vance, Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, and Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick. As Fordham political science professor Monika McDermott put it, the shift “fits with the MAGA movement's vision of the role that men play and the roles that women play. And so, yeah, women are figureheads and can do things about the family, but the experts are still the masculine figures.”

Title X Gutted for Women, Testosterone Therapy For Men Made a Priority. [New HHS guidance for Title X](#) — the federal family planning program that funds contraception access for low-income women — emphasizes “chronic disease” and “optimal health” while sidelining the contraceptive services that have defined the program for 50 years. Kennedy's weird obsession with “sperm count” has become a [running joke](#) and HHS has simultaneously made testosterone and erectile dysfunction a priority, [abruptly canceling 16 Office of Minority Health grants](#) for infant mortality and postpartum care in favor of research into “root causes” of infertility like low sperm count and ED. [The Wall Street Journal reports that](#) HHS has now pulled \$12 million from the Office of Minority Health to fund Kennedy's security

costs.

VOICES OF THE BETRAYED

Glyphosate

Daily Caller: [MAHA World Livid After SCOTUS Pesticides Ruling](#)

The Blaze: [MAHA allies rage over Trump's support for controversial weed-killing chemical](#)

Washington Post: [As midterms near, MAHA anger over pesticides reaches boiling point](#)

Washington Examiner: [Glyphosate is straining the MAHA coalition](#)

USA Today: [Supreme Court sides with weedkiller Roundup, making some MAHA activists angry](#)

USA Today: [Will RFK Jr.'s MAHA voters shun GOP in midterms over 'major mistake'?](#)

NBC: ['The decision is sickening': MAHA leaders feel betrayed by Supreme Court ruling on Roundup weed killer](#)

Politico: [MAHA unleashes on White House after Trump backs pesticide](#)

The Bulwark: [The MAHA Meltdown](#)

Politico: ["At the Supreme Court, Trump's White House sided with Bayer in an amicus brief, prompting widespread frustration among MAHA advocates."](#)

[Reuters](#): MAHA supporters flooded social media with posts and comments about their disappointment, including images with the text, "we do not consent to being poisoned." A petition to Trump being circulated by the MAHA group Moms Across America, whose founder Zen Honeycutt is a longtime Kennedy ally, urges him to rescind the order. "True national security is healthy families and the ability of the next generation to reproduce and thrive, which will not happen for as long as these pervasive, harmful herbicides are being used," the petition said.

PFAS

Inside EPA: [MAHA Activists, Environmentalists Blast EPA's Plans To Drop PFAS Limits](#)

The Guardian: [Maha v Maga: feud grows as Trump EPA rolls back rules on toxic chemicals](#)

[Washington Post](#): "If they really cared about regulating it, then they would keep those standards in place," said Alex Clark, a prominent conservative wellness influencer and podcaster aligned with the MAHA movement. "I am tired of making excuses for dangerous chemicals to continue flooding our environment and harming our kids."

MAHA Moms

New York Times: [Facing Angry 'MAHA Moms,' Kennedy Defends Trump's Pesticide Order](#)

KFF: [Republicans Fret Over RFK Jr.'s Anti-Vaccine Policies While MAHA Moms Stew](#)

Rolling Stone: [Are MAGA and MAHA Heading for Divorce?](#)

Politico: [The MAHA moms who helped elect Trump are out of patience](#)

- “We thought we were getting a different administration that wanted to stand up to special interests, stand up to the pharmaceutical industry, stand up to the food companies, stand up to Big Ag, Big Chem. And that is not what we got. What we have right now is business as usual,” said **Vani Hari, a leader in the MAHAMovement known as Food Babe who rose to prominence through her fight against chemicals in food.** “We’re going to vote for whatever candidate puts the health of our children first,” Hari said. “I don’t have loyalty to anybody. And a lot of people feel that way within the MAHA movement.”
- But some in the MAHA coalition already feel the White House has washed its hands. **Kelly Ryerson, a MAHA influencer who runs a group that promotes regenerative farming and has met with senior White House officials on pesticide policy,** said it feels like the administration has made a “calculation” to move on from MAHA. “The swing Kennedy people aren’t going to show up at this point,” Ryerson said about the midterms.
- “I wouldn’t vote for Trump [again],” said **Hannah Dunning, a MAHA influencer who posts about chemical-free clothing.** “He’s shown his true colors. Come on ... I don’t think Trump is concerned about health in any way, shape or form. I think he’s concerned about votes or his own legacy, and at this point, you know, not needing the votes, I think that’s why we’re seeing some more disregard of the MAHA movement.”
- **Alex Clark, a lifelong Republican who hosts a wellness podcast produced by the conservative group Turning Point USA:** “The fear is this was a bait and switch to use us for our votes and then do nothing that we voted for, so if we turn that into a reality, there will be such immense backlash against the GOP for years to come.”