

CONCERNED
WOMEN *for* AMERICA
LEGISLATIVE ACTION COMMITTEE

February 14, 2022

The Honorable
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator,

On behalf of the hundreds of thousands of supporters of Concerned Women for America Legislative Action Committee (CWALAC) around the country, I write to urge you to oppose the nomination of Dr. Robert Califf to be Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). Dr. Califf, previously FDA Commissioner under President Barack Obama, has a troubling record of corrupting data to appease the abortion industry at the expense of vulnerable women's health and safety. He cannot be trusted to conduct proper oversight of our nation's pharmaceuticals and is therefore unfit to serve a second term. CWALAC will score against Dr. Califf's confirmation and include this vote in our annual scorecard.

To ensure minimal medical risks, the FDA applies Risk Evaluation and Mitigation Strategies (REMS) to drugs with significant health and safety concerns. The REMS for the chemical abortion pill historically required reporting of both severe adverse events and fatalities. Under Califf's leadership in 2016, the FDA altered the REMS to solely report fatal events. This ill-conceived decision came amidst thousands of reports of adverse reactions to the pill.¹ Later that year, 75 members of Congress sent a bipartisan letter to the FDA highlighting concerns and requesting comprehensive metrics on the dangers of the abortion pill, mifepristone.² Dr. Califf never responded.

The dangers of chemical abortion cannot be underestimated. According to the Charlotte Lozier Institute, emergency room visits following a chemical abortion have increased 500%, and over 60% of these hospital visits were miscoded as treatments for miscarriage.³ Further, the rate of abortion-related ER visits is increasing at a faster rate than that of surgical abortions.⁴ FDA's data on deaths and injuries related to the abortion pill is incomplete per a recent report noting hundreds of "uncodable" events where women never received proper follow-up after adverse reactions.⁵ The FDA's December 16, 2021 decision to permanently allow this lethal pill to be distributed via mail is astounding given the risks of hemorrhaging, undetected ectopic pregnancies, and more. Women deserve better.

During his confirmation hearing before the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, Dr. Califf promised that the FDA's decisions would always be grounded in the best available data. This promise would be reassuring if current metrics on chemical abortion were not marred by his egregious lack of discernment leading the agency in 2016.

¹ https://www.aclu.org/sites/default/files/field_document/dkt.140_-_joint_stipulations_of_facts_with_exhibits_april_15_2021.pdf

² https://www.lankford.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/smith-lankford_letter_to_fda_on_abortion_drug.pdf

³ <https://lozierinstitute.org/public-health-threat-chemical-abortion-leads-to-significantly-higher-rate-of-er-visits/>

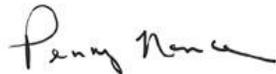
⁴ Ibid.

⁵ <https://issuesinlawandmedicine.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Deaths-and-Severe-Adverse-Events-after-the-use-of-Mifepristone-as-an-Abortifacient-from-September-2000-to-February-2019-copy5.pdf>

Following his tenure under the Obama Administration, Dr. Califf went on to work as a consultant and board member for numerous health industry companies such as Cytokinetics, Bitterroot Bio, Centessa Pharmaceuticals, and Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, leaving him millions of dollars in stock options. This potential conflict of interest raises further alarm that Dr. Califf will be beholden to special interests rather than the American people.

As our nation battles COVID-19, a raging opioid crisis, and more, we need a leader who will prioritize public health and safety over partisan interests. Dr. Robert Califf has proven to be compromised in this mission. We urge you to vote NO on his confirmation to lead the FDA. Another term under his direction would be seriously detrimental to women across the country.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Penny Young Nance". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Penny Young Nance
CEO and President