

Section Three

THE GENERAL WELFARE

When our Founders wrote in the Constitution that the federal government would “promote the general Welfare,” they could not have fathomed a massive bureaucracy that would someday spend \$3 trillion in a single year—roughly the sum, combined, spent by the departments covered in this section in 2022. Approximately half of that colossal sum was spent by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) alone—the belly of the massive behemoth that is the modern administrative state.

HHS is home to Medicare and Medicaid, the principal drivers of our \$31 trillion national debt. When Congress passed and President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law these programs, they were set on autopilot with no plan for how to pay for them. The first year that Medicare spending was visible on the books was 1967. From that point on through 2020—according to the American Main Street Initiative’s analysis of official federal tallies—Medicare and Medicaid combined cost \$17.8 trillion, while our combined federal deficits over that same span were \$17.9 trillion. In essence, our deficit problem is a Medicare and Medicaid problem.

HHS is also home to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the National Institutes of Health (NIH), the duo most responsible—along with President Joe Biden—for the irrational, destructive, un-American mask and vaccine mandates that were imposed upon an ostensibly free people during the COVID-19 pandemic. All along, it was clear from randomized controlled trials—the gold standard of medical research—that masks provide little to no benefit in preventing the spread of viruses and might even be counterproductive. Yet the CDC ignored these high-quality RCTs, cherry-picked from politically malleable

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“observational studies,” and declared that everyone except children and infants below the age of two should don masks. Under COVID, as former director of HHS’s Office of Civil Rights Roger Severino writes in Chapter 14, the CDC exposed itself as “perhaps the most incompetent and arrogant agency in the federal government.”

Nor is the CDC the only villain in this play. Severino writes of the National Institutes of Health, “Despite its popular image as a benign science agency, NIH was responsible for paying for research in aborted baby body parts, human animal chimera experiments”—in which the genes of humans and animals are mixed, “and gain-of-function viral research that may have been responsible for COVID-19.” Severino writes that “Anthony Fauci’s division of the NIH”—the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases—“owns half the patent for the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine,” and “several NIH employees” receive “up to \$150,000 annually from Moderna vaccine sales.” That would be the same experimental mRNA vaccine that the CDC now wants to force on children, who are at little to no risk from COVID-19 but at great risk from public health officials.

The incestuous relationship between the NIH, CDC, and vaccine makers—with all of the conflict of interest it entails—cannot be allowed to continue, and the revolving door between them must be locked. As Severino writes, “Funding for scientific research should not be controlled by a small group of highly paid and unaccountable insiders at the NIH, many of whom stay in power for decades. The NIH monopoly on directing research should be broken.” What’s more, NIH has long “been at the forefront in pushing junk gender science.” The next HHS secretary should immediately put an end to the department’s foray into woke transgender activism.

HHS also pushes abortion as a form of “health care,” skirting and sometimes blatantly defying the Hyde Amendment in the process. Severino writes that the “FDA should...reverse its approval of chemical abortion drugs because the politicized approval process was illegal from the start.” In addition, HHS programs often violate the spirit, and sometimes the letter, of conscience-protection laws. Severino writes that the HHS “Secretary should pursue a robust agenda to protect the fundamental right to life, protect conscience rights, and uphold bodily integrity rooted in biological realities, not ideology.” The next secretary should also reverse the Biden Administration’s focus on “‘LGBTQ+ equity,’ subsidizing single-motherhood, disincentivizing work, and penalizing marriage,” replacing such policies with those encouraging marriage, work, motherhood, fatherhood, and nuclear families.

If there is another department that has gone off the rails like HHS during the Obama and Biden Administrations, it is the once proud Department of Justice (DOJ). As former counselor to the attorney general Gene Hamilton writes in Chapter 17, the department “has a long and noble history”—Edmund Randolph, the first attorney general, took office the same year as President Washington—yet its

longstanding reputation has been marred by the Biden Administration’s abuse of the department’s powers for its own ends. Hamilton writes that the department’s “unprecedented politicization and weaponization” under Biden and Attorney General Merrick Garland, resulting in “politically motivated and viewpoint-based prosecutions” of political enemies and indifference to the crimes of political allies, has made the department “a threat to the Republic.” The most important thing for the next attorney general to do is to refocus the department on its core functions of “protecting public safety and defending the rule of law,” while restoring its “values of independence, impartiality, honesty, integrity, respect, and excellence.”

This is especially true of the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI). A bloated, arrogant, increasingly lawless organization, especially at the top, “the FBI views itself as an independent agency” that is “on par with the Attorney General,” rather than as an agency that is under the AG and fully accountable to him or her. To rein in this “completely out of control” bureau and remind it of its place within—rather than at the top of—the DOJ hierarchy, Hamilton writes that the FBI’s separate Office of General Counsel (with “approximately 300 attorneys”), separate Office of Legislative Affairs, and separate Office of Public Affairs should all be abolished. Requiring the FBI to get its legal advice from the wider department “would serve as a crucial check on an agency that has recently pushed past legal boundary after legal boundary.” Indeed, Hamilton writes, “[t]he next conservative Administration should eliminate any offices within the FBI that it has the power to eliminate without any action from Congress.”

Elsewhere, DOJ should target violent and career criminals, not parents; work to dismantle criminal organizations, partly by rigorously prosecuting interstate drug activity; and restart the Trump Administration’s “China Initiative” (to address Chinese espionage and theft of trade secrets), which the Biden Administration “terminated...largely out of a concern for poor ‘optics.’” It should also enforce existing federal law that prohibits mailing abortifacients, rather than harassing pro-life demonstrators; respect the constitutional guarantee of the freedom of speech, rather than trying to police speech on the internet; and enforce federal immigration laws, rather than pretending there is no border.

In contrast to DOJ’s long history, the Department of Education (the department, or ED), discussed by Lindsey Burke in Chapter 11, is a creation of the Jimmy Carter Administration. The department is a convenient one-stop shop for the woke education cartel, which—as the COVID era showed—is not particularly concerned with children’s education. Schools should be responsive to parents, rather than to leftist advocates intent on indoctrination—and the more the federal government is involved in education, the less responsive to parents the public schools will be. This department is an example of federal intrusion into a traditionally state and local realm. For the sake of American children, Congress should shutter it and return control of education to the states.

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Short of this, the Secretary of Education should insist that the department serve parents and American ideals, not advocates whose message is that children can choose their own sex, that America is “systemically racist,” that math itself is racist, and that Martin Luther King, Jr.’s ideal of a colorblind society should be rejected in favor of reinstating a color-conscious society. The next head of this department will have a lot to do—hopefully culminating in the department’s closure and the salutary restoration of educational control to states, localities, and parents.

The next Secretary of Energy will similarly have much work to do. Under the next President, the Department of Energy should end the Biden Administration’s unprovoked war on fossil fuels, restore America’s energy independence, oppose eyesore windmills built at taxpayer expense, and respect the right of Americans to buy and drive cars of their own choosing, rather than trying to force them into electric vehicles and eventually out of the driver’s seat altogether in favor of self-driving robots. As former commissioner of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission Bernard L. McNamee says in Chapter 12, “A conservative President must be committed to unleashing all of America’s energy resources and making the energy economy serve the American people, not special interests.”

In Chapter 10, Daren Bakst writes that the Biden Administration’s Department of Agriculture claims to be “transforming the food system as we know it.” But the government “does not need to transform the food system”; instead, “it should respect American farmers, truckers,” and families. In Chapter 13, former chief of staff at the Environmental Protection Agency Mandy Gunasekara writes that the EPA’s “current activities and staffing levels far exceed its congressional mandates and purpose,” whereas its “initial success” in its “infancy” (in the 1970s) was a product of “clear mandates, a streamlined structure, [and] recognition of the states’ prominent role.” Having since become a “coercive” agency, full of embedded activists, its “structure and mission should be greatly circumscribed.”

Former secretary of the Department of Housing and Urban Development Dr. Benjamin S. Carson writes in Chapter 15 that HUD is beset with “mission creep” and regularly crosses the line into exercising quasi-legislative powers. In the next Administration, it should refocus on its core duties and keep “noncitizens...from living in federally assisted housing,” provide enhanced “oversight of foreign ownership of [U.S.] real estate,” and “reinvigorate paths to upward economic mobility” and economic “self-sufficiency.” In Chapter 18, former acting assistant secretary of policy at the Department of Labor Jonathan Berry writes that the department and related agencies should pursue pro-family, pro-worker policies to help “restore the family-supporting job as the centerpiece of the American economy,” in lieu of the current Administration’s “left-wing social-engineering agenda”—“the most assertive” in history—which empowers race, gender, and climate-change activists at the expense of American workers.

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In Chapter 19, on the Department of Transportation (DOT), former DOT deputy assistant director for research and technology Diana Furchtgott-Roth writes, “In pursuit of an anti-fossil-fuel climate agenda never approved by Congress, the Biden Administration has raised fuel economy requirements to levels that cannot realistically be met” by most gas-powered cars, thereby reducing Americans’ freedom while increasing costs. Lastly, former acting chief of staff at the Department of Veterans Affairs Brooks D. Tucker, echoing concerns expressed in other chapters, writes in Chapter 20 that the Veterans Affairs (VA) must be “accountable to the needs and problems of veterans, not subservient to the parochial preferences of the bureaucracy.”