Schwartz confirmed as CDC director after bungling confirmation hearing

“Really?”

Those hopes were dashed during Schwartz’s confirmation hearing last month when she repeatedly failed to answer questions directly and say with conviction that she would push back on Kennedy’s anti-vaccine and anti-science agendas.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of Schwartz’s testimony came when senators repeatedly asked her what she would do if (or when) she’s put in the same position as Monarez. Schwartz responded as if it hadn’t happened and would never happen. “I do not believe that the president or the secretary would ever do what you just mentioned,” she told Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) at one point, prompting him to reply: “Really?”

While senators expressed their disappointment with her responses, health experts dropped their endorsements.

Shortly after the hearing, the National Public Health Coalition, a nonprofit founded by former federal health workers, released a statement opposing her confirmation. “The public and Congress deserve a CDC Director who will follow the law, defend science, protect public health workers, and rebuild the systems that keep communities safe,” the organization said. “Based on what we saw during the Senate HELP Committee hearing on July 15, 2026, NPHC cannot support Dr. Schwartz’s nomination.”

Critical to Schwartz’s confirmation was support from self-proclaimed vaccine advocate Sen. Bill Cassidy (R-La.), who also cast a critical vote to confirm Kennedy as health secretary. While Cassidy called Schwartz’s performance in the confirmation hearing “disappointing,” he later said he had been reassured. He said he had spoken with her more after the hearing as well as with her former colleagues. “I’m confident that she knows what she is doing,” he said, according to Stat News.

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