



Rep. Dave Weldon (R-Fla.) speaks during a press conference in Washington on May 24, 2005. Joe Raedle/Getty Images

PREMIUM REPORTS

5 Things to Know About Dr. Dave Weldon, Trump's Nominee to Lead CDC

The Florida physician has been a critic of the CDC and its vaccine program.



By **Samantha Flom** | November 26, 2024 Updated: November 26, 2024

Former congressman Dr. Dave Weldon is President-elect Donald Trump's nominee to serve as director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

In his announcement Nov. 22, Trump described the Florida physician as “a respected conservative leader on fiscal and social issues” who would “prioritize transparency, competence, and high standards at [the] CDC.”

“Americans have lost trust in the CDC and in our federal health authorities, who have engaged in censorship, data manipulation, and misinformation,” Trump said. “Given the current chronic health crisis in our country, the CDC must step up and correct past errors to focus on the prevention of disease.”

The nomination was made months after Weldon lost his primary bid for a seat in the Florida House.

Here are five things to know about the former congressman.

A Veteran Physician

Weldon, 71, is initially from Amityville, New York. He earned his medical degree from the State University of New York at Buffalo in 1981 and then joined the U.S. Army Medical Corps, where he served for six years.

While in the Army Reserves, Weldon began practicing as a physician in Florida. He continues practicing medicine today as a board-certified internist.

Weldon also serves as a clinical professor of biomedical engineering at the Florida Institute of Technology and as the chief medical officer for Luke & Associates, a health care staffing agency contracted with the Department of Defense.

Weldon has served as president of the Alliance of Health Care Sharing Ministries, a trade group for the health sharing programs, a health insurance alternative.

He has been married to his wife, Nancy, since 1979, and the couple has two grown children.



Rep. Dave Weldon (R-Fla.) (L) speaks as Rep. Melissa Hart (R-Pa.) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) listen during a news conference on Capitol Hill on Jan. 28, 2004. Alex Wong/Getty Images

Congressional Career

Weldon won his first bid for the U.S. House in 1994, flipping Florida's 15th District from blue to red.

While in Congress, Weldon served on various committees, including the Labor/Health and Human Services Appropriations Committee.

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In his statement, Trump noted the former congressman's efforts toward increased accountability at the Department of Health and Human Services and the CDC, and his leading role in Oversight and Government Reform committee hearings.

He also lauded the former congressman's role in enacting a ban on the patenting of human embryos.

As a fiercely pro-life physician, Weldon introduced a bill to protect the conscience rights of pro-life doctors. He also advocated for the current federal ban on partial-birth abortions, which was enacted in 2003.

"I believe that the most important indicator of a civilized society is how it treats its weakest and most defenseless population. And I cannot think of a weaker or more defenseless person than a baby in the mother's womb," Weldon said after a prior version of the ban passed the House in April 2000.

Weldon won reelection six times before announcing in 2008 that he would not seek an eighth term.

In 2012, he sought to unseat U.S. Sen. Bill Nelson (D-Fla.) but lost his primary to Rep. Connie Mack IV. Nelson went on to defeat Mack in the general election.



Rep. Dave Weldon (R-Fla.) (L) and Rep. Chris Smith (R-N.J.) (R) walk with brain-damaged patient Terri Schiavo's brother, Bobby Schindler (C), as they seek to restore Schiavo's feeding tube, at the U.S. Capitol on March 20, 2005. Alex Wong/Getty Images

The Terri Schiavo Case

One controversy that garnered Weldon national attention as a congressman was his attempted intervention in the case of Terri Schiavo, a Florida woman who was left in a vegetative state after going into cardiac arrest.

After she had spent eight years on life support, Schiavo's husband sought to remove her feeding tube. Her parents and siblings, however, opposed that decision. When state courts sided with Schiavo's husband, both state and federal lawmakers moved to intervene.

Weldon, who disagreed with Schiavo's diagnosis, introduced a bill to allow a federal judicial review of her case. The bill passed both chambers and was signed by President George Bush, but a federal judge ultimately sided with Schiavo's husband. She died on March 31, 2005, two weeks after her feeding tube was removed for a final time.

Position on Vaccines

Weldon has long been outspoken about his concerns regarding the adverse side effects of certain vaccines.

As a congressman, he noted the conflict of interest in having the CDC oversee vaccine safety when it is also in charge of the nation's vaccine development, promotion, and supply. He introduced legislation to establish an independent agency under the Department of Health and Human Services for vaccine safety.



“Federal agencies charged with overseeing vaccine safety research have failed. They have failed to provide sufficient resources for vaccine safety research. They have failed to adequately fund extramural research. And, they have failed to free themselves from conflicts of interest that serve to undermine public confidence in the safety of vaccines,” Weldon said in introducing that bill in 2007.

Weldon’s position on the matter aligns him with Robert F. Kennedy Jr., Trump’s choice to lead the Department of Health and Human Services, who has likewise shared concerns about the safety of certain vaccines.

2024 Candidacy

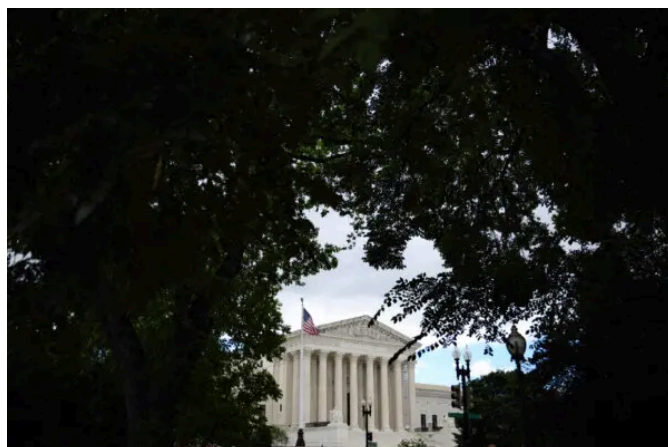
Earlier this year, Weldon was a candidate for the Florida House’s 32nd District representing Brevard County.

He ran in the Republican primary against state Sen. Debbie Mayfield, but lost the race 65 to 35 percent.

Mayfield went on to defeat Democrat Juan Hinojosa by roughly the same margin in the general election.

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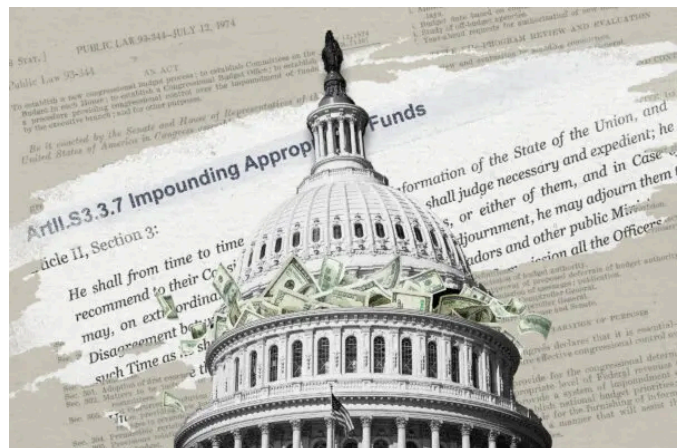
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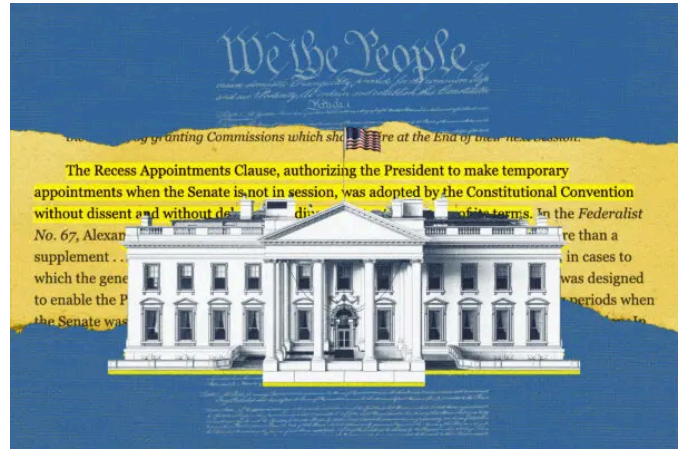
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