Dr. Dave Weldon

NOMINEE, DIRECTOR OF CDC

Updated: November 25, 2024

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. David Weldon is a physician and former member of Congress. He was born in Amityville, New York On August 31, 1953. After graduating from Stony Brook University in 1978, he earned his M.D. from the University at Buffalo School of Medicine in 1981. Dr. Weldon served in the U.S Army from 1981 to 1987 and in the Army Reserve from 1987 until 1992. After his military services, he practiced medicine in Florida. Dr. Weldon represented Florida's 15th congressional district in Congress from 1995 to 2009 and ran an unsuccessful Senate campaign in 2012. He is currently a physician at Health First Medical Group in Malabar, Florida.

Dr. Weldon is married to Nancy Weldon and has two children.

Fun Fact – Dr. Weldon plays bass guitar. In December 2005, he joined other Congressmen to form "the *Second Amendments*," a bipartisan rock and country band that performed for U.S. troops overseas during the holidays. The band broke up after their gigs became partisan.

POLITICAL CAREER

Dr. Weldon representing Florida's 15th congressional district in the U.S. House of Representatives from 1995 to 2009. During his tenure, he served on several committees, including: the Committee on Appropriations, Committee on Science, Committee on Education and the Workforce, Committee on Government Reform, and Committee on Banking and Currency. He was also a member of the Republican Study Committee.

In 2012, Dr. Weldon ran for the U.S. Senate but was defeated in the Republican primary.

While in Congress, Weldon criticized the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), especially its vaccine program. He championed research that thimerosal, a vaccine preservative, is linked to autism. He was a founding member of the Congressional Autism Caucus and pushed for thimerosal to be removed from vaccines.

Dr. Weldon received nationwide attention for his involvement in the case of Terri Schiavo, a Florida woman in an irreversible persistent vegetative state whose husband's attempted to remove her feeding tubes and end her life. The case attracted national attention and prompted interventions by congressional Republicans.

POLICY POSITIONS

Vaccines

Dr. Weldon Led Several Bills in Congress to Reshape the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program

In 2001, Weldon and Rep. Jerry Nadler (D-NY) introduced the Vaccine Injured Children's Compensation Act of 2001. The bill made several changes to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program including designating the Program as a remedial program under which sovereign immunity does not apply; change the burden of proof requirement for the award of compensation; require any defense raised that an illness, injury, or death was due to unrelated factors to be proved by clear and convincing evidence; and increase the statute of limitations under the Program. (Introduction March 29, 2001)

Weldon also introduced the Vaccine Injury Compensation Program Corrective Amendments of 2000, which would have made several changes to the National Vaccine Injury Compensation Program including eliminating sovereign immunity; changing the burden of proof requirement for the award of compensation; requiring any defense raised that an illness, injury, or death was due to unrelated factors to be proved by clear and convincing evidence; and increasing the statute of limitations under the Program. (Introduction September 27, 2000)

Dr. Weldon Led Activities to Remove Vaccine Components and Increase Transparency

In 2004, 2005, and 2007, Weldon and Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) introduced the Mercury Free Vaccines Act which would have required removing mercury from vaccines. (Press Release February 8, 2007)

In 2006 and 2007, Weldon and Maloney introduced the Vaccine Safety and Public Confidence Assurance Act of 2007, which would have given responsibility for the nation's vaccine safety to an independent agency within the Department of Health and Human Services, removing most vaccine safety research from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC). The members noted in their release that the CDC has responsibility for both vaccine safety and promotion, which "is an inherent conflict of interest increasingly garnering public criticism." (Press Release April 19, 2007)

Dr. Weldon Has Referenced Links Between Vaccines and Autism

In 2007, Weldon offered an amendment that was approved by the House Appropriations Committee that prevents taxpayer money from being used to administer "mercury-laced flu shots" under three years of age. The FY 2008 LHHS Conference report included the language. (Press Release July 11, 2007)(Conference Report)

In a 2004 statement, Weldon urged the Institute of Medicine (IOM), now the National Academy of Medicine, to further investigate its previous conclusion that "exposure to thimerosal-

containing vaccines could be associated with neurodevelopmental disorders." (Posted by Children's Health Defense, statement given February 9, 2024)

Weldon raised concerns about MMR and autism stating, "The evidence of persistent measles infection in the GI tract and CSF of children with regressive autism continues to expand and further research should be encouraged." (Posted by Children's Health Defense, statement given February 9, 2024)

CDC

In his 2004 statement to the IOM, Weldon raised concerns with the "ability of CDC's National Immunization Program to objectively investigate this matter." He added, "(t)he CDC has a built-in conflict of interest that is likely to bias any reviews." (Posted by Children's Health Defense, statement given February 9, 2024)

"Right to Life" Issues

Dr. Weldon Was the Original Sponsor of the Provider Conscience Appropriations Rider

In 2005, Weldon introduced an amendment that was attached to the 2005 appropriations bill on provider conscience. The amendment has been readopted or incorporated into each subsequent appropriations act since then. That amendment states that any funds in the bill may not be made available to a federal, state, or local program that "subjects any institutional or individual health care entity to discrimination on the basis that the health care entity does not provide, pay for, provide coverage of, or refer for abortions." (HHS Conscience Protections)

In 2004, in defense of the his amendment, Weldon said, "The reason I sought to include this provision in the bill is my experience as a physician, and I still see patients, is that the majority of nurses, technicians and doctors who claim to be pro-choice who claim to support *Roe v. Wade* always say to me that they would never want to participate in an abortion, perform an abortion, or be affiliated with doing an abortion. This provision is meant to protect health care entities from discrimination because they choose not to provide abortion services." (Congressional Record November 20, 2004)

Dr. Weldon Led Legislation to Prohibit Human Cloning

In 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007, Weldon introduced the Human Cloning Prohibition Act, which amends the federal criminal code to prohibit any public or private person or entity, in or affecting interstate commerce, from: (1) performing or attempting to perform human cloning; (2) participating in an attempt to perform human cloning; or (3) shipping, receiving, or importing the product of human cloning for any purpose. (Bill Introduction April 4, 2005)

Dr. Weldon Led the Fetus Farming Prohibition Act – Now Law

In 2006, Weldon introduced the Fetus Farming Prohibition Act of 2006 which was signed into law by President George W. Bush. The bill prohibits soliciting or accepting tissue from a fetus

that was created for research purposes and accepting tissue or cells from a fetus that was gestated in a nonhuman animal. (Congressional Transcript July 18, 2006)

Dr. Weldon Took an Active Interest in the Terri Schiavo Case

In 2003, Weldon said on the House floor that the attempt to remove Schiavo's feeding tubes was a "grave injustice." (Congressional Record October 21, 2003)

In 2005, Weldon introduced the Incapacitated Persons Legal Protection Act which would extend habeas corpus protections to persons who are subject to a court order authorizing or directing the withholding or withdrawal of food, fluids, or medical treatment necessary to sustain the person's life. (Introduction March 10, 2005)

Weldon and Rep. James Sensenbrenner (R-WI) also introduced the Protection of Incapacitated Persons Act of 2005 (H.R. 1332). The bill, approved by the House by voice vote, would authorize the removal of cases in state court to the U.S. federal court to defend the rights of incapacitated persons under the U.S. Constitution or any U.S. law. (Press Release March 17, 2005)

Weldon petitioned her family in 2005 to personally review her case. (NYT March 23, 2005)

MEDICARE

In 2002, Weldon introduced the Seniors' Access to Health Care Act which would establish a prescription drug plan for Medicare in Part C. The bill would have created a competitive bidding program for these new Part C organizations. The legislation was introduced ahead of the Congress providing a prescription drug benefit for seniors. (Congressional Record September 25, 2002.)

Weldon introduced the Medicare Solvency and Enhanced Benefits Act of 2002, which would reform Medicare by improving patient access to health care services, extending the solvency of the Medicare Trust Fund, and providing improved medical care by reducing the excessive burden the liability system places on the health care delivery system. (Introduction on June 26, 2002)

AFFORDABLE CARE ACT

During his 2012 Senate campaign, Weldon said he would support repeal of the Affordable Care Act. He called for additional reforms to the system "built on the fundamental principles of limited government, market economics, and personal responsibility." He called for additional insurance reform, tort reform, and expanded use of medical savings accounts. (Weldon Issue Position January 1, 2012)

HIV

In 2006, Weldon sponsored the Ryan White CARE Act Amendments of 2006, which would reauthorize the program. (Bill Introduction March 16, 2006)

RESEARCH

Dr. Weldon Supported Increasing NIHs Role in Clinical Research

In 2004 and 2005, Weldon sponsored the Clinical Research Act of 2005. In introducing the bill. Weldon said, “the Federal commitment to clinical research has not kept pace with rising costs.” The bill would require the National Institutes of Health Director to award clinical investigator advancement grants to eligible academic health centers to: (1) establish career development programs for new and mid-level clinician-investigators who are fully committed to academic clinical research careers; (2) support the translation of basic science to patient care by implementing and conducting all aspects of their clinical research mission; and (3) support activities leading to innovative ways to achieve such purposes in an efficient and cost-effective manner. Requires that health centers receive a proportionate share of the total grant money awarded based on the amount invested by the grantee in clinical research compared to the total clinical research investment of all grantees. (Bill Introduction May 11, 2005)(Congressional Record May 5, 2005)