

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Chair, Senate HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo
Ranking Member, Senate Finance Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr
Ranking Member, Senate HELP Committee
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden, Chairwoman Murray, Ranking Member Crapo, and Ranking Member Burr:

On behalf of Families USA, one of the nation's leading health care consumer and justice organizations dedicated to high quality, affordable health care and improved health for all, we are honored to support your consideration of President Biden's nomination of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to serve as the next United States Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS). Attorney General Becerra has dedicated his career to fighting for improved health equity, rooting out industry abuses that contribute to sky-rocketing health care costs, and ensuring every person in America has affordable access to high-quality health care. At a time when our nation's health and health care is under unprecedented strain, Mr. Becerra's expertise on health care issues and his extensive and consistent track record of championing better health and health care for all in our nation make him uniquely qualified to serve as HHS Secretary.

During his long and distinguished tenure on the House Ways and Means Committee, AG Becerra was instrumental in protecting Medicare coverage for seniors and drafting the Affordable Care Act (ACA), expanding health care access to millions of people while securing critical consumer protections. As Attorney General of California, he continued this important work, leading the charge to defend the essential coverage protections provided under the ACA from political attacks in the *California v. Texas* case currently being reviewed by the Supreme Court.

AG Becerra has been a stalwart defender of equitable access to health. He led the fight against the Trump Administration's "Health Care Refusal Rule" which would have disproportionately harmed people of color, LGBTQ communities, and women seeking health care services by allowing medical staff to refuse life-saving care to patients at their discretion. He has championed bipartisan immigration reform efforts to find commonsense solutions that ensure no one is denied basic healthcare because of who they are or where they are from.

AG Becerra has also consistently and fearlessly taken on powerful special interests in order to put access and affordability for individuals and families at the center of our health care system. He has been a champion for lower drug costs, ending the opioid epidemic, and toppling health system monopolies that create perverse incentives that block consumer access to high-quality, high-value, affordable care. He took bold action to end "pay for delay" practices by pharmaceutical companies that make backroom

deals to delay generic drugs from entering the market - deals that put the interests of industry over those of consumers. AG Becerra sought accountability for the drug companies responsible for the opioid crisis and won landmark settlements to be used to fund future opioid treatment. He won a groundbreaking settlement from Sutter Health, Northern California's largest hospital system, for overcharging patients through price gouging and monopolistic behavior - one of the largest legal actions against anti-competitive behavior in the health care sector.

As the COVID-19 health crisis continues to expose serious flaws in our health care system, it is absolutely essential to confirm a Secretary of Health and Human Services whose understanding of the scope of opportunities and challenges we face is beyond reproach. AG Becerra is strong leader who, I am confident, would help pave the country's way toward health and economic recovery.

I urge you and your colleagues in the Senate to move swiftly on AG Becerra's nomination so that the important work of addressing the COVID-19 crisis and building a better, stronger, and more equitable health care system can move forward in earnest.

Please don't hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information.

Sincerely,



Frederick Isasi
Executive Director, Families USA

FamiliesUSA.org

1225 New York Avenue, NW, Suite 800
Washington, DC 20005

main 202-628-3030 / fax 202-347-2417