

February 22, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden  
Chairman, Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Crapo  
Ranking Member, Committee on Finance  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray  
Chair, Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor, and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Richard Burr  
Chair, Committee on Health, Education,  
Labor, and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden, Ranking Member Crapo, Chair Murray, and Ranking Member Burr,

On behalf of Lambda Legal, the Human Rights Campaign, the National Center for Lesbian Rights and the 15 undersigned organizations representing the interests of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) people and everyone living with HIV, we write to express our strong support for the nomination of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to be the next Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Our country is amid a public health crisis. We presently are confronted by the unprecedented challenges created by the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the many structural barriers that diminish people's access to health care and exacerbate longstanding health inequities. It is therefore critical that HHS be led by a person with proven leadership ability, a deep understanding of our health care system and the need for equitable access to health care and human services, and an appreciation of the needs of communities of color and LGBTQ people. Attorney General Becerra is such person.

Attorney General Becerra possesses a keen understanding of our health care system. As a member of Congress, Attorney General Becerra worked on the passage of the Affordable Care Act, reducing health disparities, lowering drug prices, and more. As Attorney General, he has been a leader in ensuring the implementation and preservation of the Affordable Care Act, which has expanded access to health coverage for millions of Americans, by fighting off legal challenges against the Affordable Care Act, including in *Texas v. United States*. His leadership in these cases required not only a profound understanding of the law, but also insight in the many intricacies of the Affordable Care Act and our health care system.

Attorney General Becerra has also been a stalwart supporter of LGBTQ people's right to equality and equitable access to care. Specifically, with regards to health care, Attorney General Becerra has brought legal challenges to administrative actions and regulations that would have resulted in

diminished access to care for LGBTQ people and other minorities, such as: regulations eliminating antidiscrimination protections under the Affordable Care Act for LGBTQ people and people with limited English proficiency, among others; regulations seeking to inappropriately expand who could refuse to provide care to people based on religious or moral objections, which would have disproportionately LGBTQ people and those seeking reproductive health care; and actions denying access to care to our country's transgender servicemembers.

What is more, Attorney General Becerra has not only demonstrated his ability to lead a large government agency, like the California Attorney General's Office, but also shown that he can listen to and work with a broad range of stakeholders. His work seeking equity and justice for all Californians and all persons in America is to be admired. Indeed, he has led multiple coalitions of attorneys general in commenting to proposed HHS regulations.

Put simply, we believe Attorney General Becerra is the right person to lead HHS, especially at this particular moment in time. His commitment to civil rights, health care equity, and the rights of LGBTQ people and everyone living with HIV is without a question.

Sincerely,

Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, Inc.  
Human Rights Campaign  
National Center for Lesbian Rights  
BiNet USA  
Center for Disability Rights  
Center for LGBTQ Economic Advancement & Research  
CenterLink: The Community of LGBT Centers  
Equality California  
Family Equality  
Fenway Health  
FORGE, Inc.  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality  
National Coalition for LGBT Health  
National Equality Action Team (NEAT)  
National LGBT Cancer Network  
Silver State Equality-Nevada  
URGE: Unite for Reproductive & Gender Equity  
Whitman-Walker Institute