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February 12, 2021

The Honorable Ron Wyden
Chairman
Committee on Finance
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Wyden:

We write to express our strong support for the nomination of Xavier Becerra to be Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services. He is highly qualified and has the experience necessary to address the enormous health challenges facing our nation, including the death and disease caused by tobacco use.

Mr. Becerra has an impressive record of protecting public health and will be prepared on day one to address the COVID-19 pandemic and the stark health disparities it has exposed, as well as tobacco use, which heightens those disparities.

Tobacco use has long been the leading preventable cause of death in the U.S., causing more than 480,000 deaths and an estimated \$170 billion in health care costs each year. High rates of e-cigarette use by youth is a new challenge that is placing another generation at risk for nicotine addiction and tobacco use. Tobacco use is also a significant contributor to health disparities, as tobacco use and tobacco-caused disease have become more concentrated among certain communities of color, people with lower levels of income and education, people with a behavioral health condition, and LGBT Americans. Exacerbating this problem, cigarette smokers are at greater risk for severe illness from COVID-19, which provides an urgent new reason to help tobacco users to quit.

As the Attorney General of California, Mr. Becerra has demonstrated leadership in protecting kids from tobacco. Recognizing that youth are particularly vulnerable to nicotine use and addiction, he worked to protect kids from e-cigarette marketing and tobacco imagery in streamed video content. He also supported California's new law ending the sale of flavored tobacco products, which are a key driver of youth tobacco use. During his time in Congress, he supported the landmark law giving FDA authority to oversee tobacco products, which includes a critical requirement that new tobacco products undergo a public health review by the agency before they can be marketed.

We believe Mr. Becerra will be a strong and effective leader of the Department of Health and Human Services and will use his position to prevent disease and save lives. We urge your Committee to favorably report his nomination to the U.S. Senate and that he be quickly confirmed.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Matthew L. Myers". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew L. Myers
President
Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids

cc: The Honorable Mike Crapo, Ranking Member, Committee on Finance