



national **latin@** network

February 12, 2021

United States Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions  
United States Senate Committee on Finance  
219 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510

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

On behalf of Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities, I write this letter to express our support and endorsement of Xavier Becerra as someone who is uniquely qualified to lead the Department of Health and Human Services at this critical time. His diverse experience has placed him at the forefront of efforts to address the needs of poor and working families, legal efforts to protect access to affordable health care, and a demonstrated commitment to supporting survivors of intimate partner violence.

Casa de Esperanza is a national organization with almost 40 years of experience in supporting Latin@ communities with regards to anti-domestic and sexual violence, stalking, trafficking, and dating violence. We were founded in 1982 in Minnesota to provide emergency shelter and support services for women and children experiencing domestic violence. In 2009 Casa de Esperanza launched the National Latin@ Network for Healthy Families and Communities, which is a national resource center that provides training & technical assistance, research, and national policy advocacy focused on addressing and preventing gender-based violence, primarily in Latin@ and immigrant communities. We are part of a network of domestic violence programs that work collaboratively to promote practices and strategies to improve our nation's response to domestic violence and make safety and justice for all families a priority. Our efforts involve working closely with the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act (FVPSA) Program, located in the Family & Youth Services Bureau (FYSB), Administration for Children and Families (ACF) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Domestic and sexual violence impacts all areas of the lives of survivors and their children. The systems they access for help can either support or cause further harm and trauma. A holistic

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approach to domestic and sexual violence is needed to ensure the safety and well-being of survivors and their families. This is especially critical as the United States grapples with the COVID-19 pandemic. The inequities in our nation are inescapable as Black, Latin@, Asian/Pacific Islander and Native American communities bear the brunt of the pandemic's economic and health damages. We are at a time where all of us must work toward outcomes that benefit and are equitable for all. Leading us out of this pandemic will require unwavering ethics, a leader with integrity, and someone who understands complex bureaucratic systems, as well as the issues everyday people are currently experiencing. Mr. Becerra, through his long-term commitment to support families, women, and children, has proven he is concerned about the same lived realities of the communities we serve at Casa de Esperanza.


The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is the agency in the federal executive branch most involved with addressing the nation's human concerns. In one way or another, it touches the lives of more people than any other federal agency. It is the agency that addresses the health and well-being of all people, and within that has a longstanding commitment of working to prevent family violence and provide services, ever since the enactment of the Family Violence Prevention and Services Act in 1984. HHS is the agency best positioned to advancing a more holistic and equitable approach to improving pathways to safety for survivors of domestic violence. It is more important than ever that this department be comprised of leaders committed to ending violence against women, addressing health equity, and advancing racial equity. As such, there is no better candidate to lead the Department of Health and Human Services than Xavier Becerra.

Mr. Becerra is a deeply qualified and passionate leader with a depth and breadth of experience that spans three decades of working to address violence against women and support survivors, ensure access to healthcare, and protect Social Security and Medicare. In May of 2020, as California Attorney General, Xavier Becerra called for the reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act, stating that "[t]here's no place for violence against women anywhere." At the California Department of Justice, Becerra ensured that they were doing their part to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence and prevent and respond to crimes against women. During COVID-19, Attorney General Becerra stayed focused on the needs of survivors and worked to ensure that they had access to critical services during state-wide stay-at-home orders. At the California Department of Justice, Becerra ensured that they were doing their part to support survivors of domestic and sexual violence and prevent and respond to crimes against women." During COVID-19, Attorney General Becerra stayed focused on the needs of survivors and worked to ensure that they had access to critical services during state-wide stay-at-home orders.

We urge the Senate Committees on Health, Education, Labor and Pensions and Finance to swiftly confirm Xavier Becerra as Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions relating to these comments.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Patricia Tototzintle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P".

Patricia Tototzintle  
Chief Executive Officer