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February 22, 2021

Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator:

On behalf of our 3 million members and the 50 million students they serve, we urge you to VOTE YES on Xavier Becerra's nomination as Secretary of Health and Human Services. He is well equipped to lead the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, preserve the Affordable Care Act, and carry out the mission of the Department of Health and Human Services: to enhance the health and well-being of all Americans. Votes on this nomination may be included in NEA's Report Card for the 117th Congress.

As a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, Becerra served in leadership and on the Ways and Means Committee, where he developed deep expertise in the Affordable Care Act (ACA). As attorney general in California, he has played a key role in defending and preserving the law.

Last November, in the midst of the pandemic, Becerra appeared before the Supreme Court to argue against an effort to throw out the entire law—an effort joined by 20 states and the District of Columbia. Afterwards he tweeted, "The ACA saves lives. It is the law of the land. It is legal. We are confident the Supreme Court will agree." The Supreme Court has not yet issued a ruling, but a majority of justices appeared to support his view.

As attorney general of California, Becerra has strived to broaden access to health care, particularly among women, LGBTQ individuals, people with disabilities, and residents of rural and low-income communities. He joined other state attorneys general in a bipartisan coalition seeking to hold accountable drug manufacturers that refuse to provide discounts to federally qualified health centers, hospitals, and others serving vulnerable patient populations through the 340B Drug Pricing Program. Within the California Department of Justice, he established the Bureau of Disability Rights and the Worker Rights and Fair Labor Section.

The next Secretary of Health and Human Services needs to understand that equity, justice, and access to health care are inextricably linked. Xavier Becerra has consistently demonstrated that understanding. We urge you to support his nomination as Secretary of Health and Human Services.

Sincerely,

Marc Egan
Director of Government Relations
National Education Association