



NEWS RELEASE

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NALEO Applauds Nomination of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to lead U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

If confirmed, Becerra will be the first Latino to serve as Secretary of Health and Human Services

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials (NALEO) today released the following statement from CEO Arturo Vargas following President-elect Joe Biden’s intention to nominate California Attorney General and former Congressman Xavier Becerra to serve as the next Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS):

“NALEO congratulates California Attorney General Becerra for his nomination to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services during a perilous time for our nation as we continue to face the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first Latino to potentially serve as HHS Secretary, Attorney General Becerra possesses the leadership, knowledge, and demonstrated experience necessary to help guide our healthcare system through the most dangerous period in modern history.

“During his more than two decades in the U.S. House of Representatives, Becerra was continuously at the forefront of efforts to protect and preserve the integrity of the American healthcare system as an influential member of the Ways and Means Committee. He voted numerous times to prioritize programs like Medicare, Medicaid, and Social Security, working to ensure continued financial solvency for these widely used systems. In 2015, then-Congressman Becerra was recognized for this work when he received NALEO’s Edward R. Roybal Award for Outstanding Public Service, an honor bearing the name of his Congressional predecessor and mentor. Becerra is also a former member of the NALEO Board of Directors.

“As the first Latino in California history to serve as Attorney General, Becerra successfully led a cohort of 20 states plus the District of Columbia in a legal effort to protect healthcare coverage for over 20 million Americans. Additionally, Becerra has emphasized antitrust enforcement to combat rising medical costs in California.

“With nearly 300,000 American lives lost to COVID-19, and the virus disproportionately affecting Latino communities, Becerra’s leadership would play a major role in the nation’s recovery from the pandemic. If confirmed in the Senate, Attorney General Becerra would immediately face the daunting task of leading an agency that will oversee the distribution of a COVID-19 vaccine alongside a massive public education campaign around immunization. We share President-elect

Biden's utmost confidence in Attorney General Becerra's ability to ensure a successful rollout of the vaccine, and we urge the U.S. Senate to swiftly confirm his nomination.

"The President-elect's dedication to seeing his Cabinet and Administration mirror America is a critical step toward inclusion and representation. As we applaud the nomination of Attorney General Becerra, we continue to urge the President-elect to ensure that at least five Cabinet-level positions and at least 20 percent of the Administration's posts are held by Latinos. NALEO stands ready to work alongside the next Administration and Congress to secure a safer, healthier and vibrant future for Latinos and all Americans."

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About NALEO

The National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials is the non-partisan leadership organization of the nation's more than 6,800 Latino elected and appointed officials.