



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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STATEMENT FROM UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF XAVIER BECERRA TO LEAD THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Statement from Sonja Diaz, founding director of the UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative on President-elect Joe Biden's nomination of California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to lead the Department of Health and Human Services:

"President-elect Joe Biden's decision to nominate California Attorney General Xavier Becerra to lead the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services makes it clear that the administration understands the urgency of tackling the pandemic and overhauling a healthcare system that leaves far too many Americans without access to vital services.

California has been hard-hit by the pandemic, with Californians of color particularly burdened by a failed healthcare system that has left them with disproportionate shares of infections and deaths. Becerra's experience championing women's rights, affordable and quality healthcare, and civil rights is an asset to ensuring all Americans have the opportunities and tools necessary to sustain healthy and resilient communities. Becerra will bring the demonstrated experience and urgency to craft a national response that builds a new, inclusive and hopeful chapter in American history.

Becerra's appointment is emblematic of the diverse leadership necessary to rebuild America's systems to overcome 21st century challenges. This means ensuring Latinos are well-represented in the upper echelons of our federal government with the decision-making authority to be in the room when President-elect Biden finalizes strategy and executive actions.

As the 2020 election affirmed, Black and Latino communities are consequential to electoral outcomes and they are looking to their elected officials to ensure that people have a fair opportunity to lead vibrant lives. Access to healthcare is instrumental to that promise.

California cultivates leaders who move on to bigger stages; Vice President-elect Kamala Harris and Becerra are the first, but not the last to join President-elect Biden's administration. Now, Governor Newsom has an unparalleled opportunity to remedy the state's willful neglect of diverse leaders from Southern California by making two critically important appointments that can safeguard our fragile economy and reimagine shared prosperity for all Californians."

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ABOUT UCLA LATINO POLICY AND POLITICS INITIATIVE

The UCLA Latino Policy & Politics Initiative addresses the most critical domestic policy challenges facing Latinos and other communities of color through research, advocacy, mobilization, and leadership development to expand genuine opportunity for all Americans.