

National Hispanic Leadership Agenda

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

February 8, 2017

United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator:

The **National Hispanic Leadership Agenda (NHLA)** writes to express its strong **opposition to the confirmation of Tom Price** as Secretary of Health and Human Services. The NHLA was established in 1991 as a nonpartisan association of major Hispanic national organizations and distinguished Hispanic leaders from all over the nation. NHLA's mission calls for unity among Latinos around the country to provide the Hispanic community with greater visibility and a clearer, stronger influence in our country's affairs. NHLA brings together Hispanic leaders to establish policy priorities that address, and raise public awareness of, the major issues affecting the Latino community and the nation as a whole.

The Secretary of Health and Human Services is the nation's most senior official tasked with enhancing and protecting the health and well-being of all communities in the United States. Mr. Price's record is entirely inconsistent with the mandate of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS).

Mr. Price has consistently attacked the Affordable Care Act (ACA), landmark legislation that has improved access to healthcare for the Latinos/a community in the United States. In the 114th Congress, Mr. Price introduced the Empowering Patients First Act, which if passed, would have repealed the ACA and replaced it with a plan that would harm those who are struggling to make ends meet and those who are ill. Due to the ACA, over 4 million Latinos/as were able to gain coverage. In fact, 71 percent of Latino/a registered voters before the 2016 election said that the ACA is working well and should remain as it is or that it is working well and can be improved by decreasing out of pocket costs.¹ The ACA has opened the door to meaningful access to affordable, quality, culturally competent health coverage and care, including reproductive healthcare, for Latinos/as. The gains communities of color, and particularly Latinos, have made under the ACA will be reversed if Mr. Price is confirmed.

Mr. Price's record reflects xenophobic sentiments. Mr. Price has cosponsored H.R. 1940, the Birthright Citizenship Act of 2007, in the 110th Congress which would deny citizenship to some who are born here in the United States of immigrant parents. He also cosponsored H.R. 6061, the Secure Fence Act of 2006, in the 109th Congress and voted yes on an amendment to the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill, H.R. 5441 in the 109th Congress, which supported the anti-immigrant vigilant group, the Minuteman Project. His support of extreme anti-immigrant legislation will likely impact the ability of HHS to effectively address the health of immigrant communities in this country.

Alianza Americas
American G.I. Forum
ASPIRA Association
Avance Inc.
Casa de Esperanza: National Latin@ Network
Congressional Hispanic Caucus Institute
Cuban American National Council
Farmworker Justice
Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities
Hispanic Federation
Hispanic National Bar Association
Inter-University Program for Latino Research
Labor Council for Latin American Advancement
Latino Justice PRLDEF
League of United Latin American Citizens
MANA, A National Latina Organization
Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund
National Association of Hispanic Federal Executives
National Association of Hispanic Publications
NALEO Educational Fund
National Association of Latino Independent Producers
National Conference of Puerto Rican Women, Inc.
National Council of La Raza
National Hispana Leadership Institute
National Hispanic Caucus of State Legislators
National Hispanic Council on Aging
National Hispanic Environmental Council
National Hispanic Foundation for the Arts
National Hispanic Media Coalition
National Institute for Latino Policy
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health
National Puerto Rican Coalition Presente.org
SER Jobs for Progress National
Southwest Voter Registration Education Project
United States Hispanic Chamber of Commerce
United States Hispanic Leadership Institute
United States-Mexico Chamber of Commerce
U.S.- Mexico Foundation

Mr. Price’s hostile views regarding the LGBTQ community would undermine the important work that the ACA has achieved in advancing the health and dignity of LGBTQ individuals. Under the Obama administration, the ACA’s nondiscrimination provision has been interpreted to include protections on the basis of gender identity.¹ Additionally, in 2015, preventive services under the ACA were clarified so that transgender persons would have access to these services regardless of their gender identity, sex assigned at birth, or recorded gender.² Mr. Price has voted against legislation that would ban employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation and legislation that would fight hate crimes. Recently, he called the Obama administration’s guidelines allowing transgender students to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity as “absurd.”³ If confirmed, the important gains in health equity for the LGBTQ community will dissipate, leading to severe health disparities.

Mr. Price has consistently supported efforts to undermine a woman’s ability to make personal, reproductive healthcare decisions. As a member of the House of Representatives, he has cast anti-choice votes on access to abortion care and coverage and other reproductive health issues. His support of anti-choice legislation only further harms women of color who face multiple challenges in accessing quality, affordable reproductive health services. For example, due to barriers to healthcare, Latinas face the highest rates of cervical cancer incidence and Black women face the highest cervical cancer mortality rates.⁴ His objection to the contraceptive coverage benefit on the grounds of religious liberty ignores the fact that women of color had previously struggled to afford this care. Mr. Price will undoubtedly continue to support anti-choice policies as head of HHS.

As Secretary of HHS, Mr. Price would undermine and reverse the gains this country has made in advancing access to quality, affordable health care for the diversity of the Latino/a community, particularly those who are immigrant, LGBTQ, and women. If confirmed, the policies Mr. Price pursues will severely harm Latino/as and their families.

Accordingly, we strongly **encourage you to oppose the confirmation** of Mr. Price as Secretary of HHS.

Sincerely,



Hector E. Sanchez
Chair, National Hispanic
Leadership Agenda (NHLA)
Executive Director, Labor
Council for Latin American
Advancement (LCLAA)



Jessica González-Rojas
Co-Chair, NHLA’s Health Committee
Co-Chair, NHLA’s Latina Task Force
Executive Director, National Latina
Institute for Reproductive Health

¹ Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities, 81 Fed. Reg. 31375 45 CFR 92 (May 18, 2016).

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, *Advancing LGBT Health and Well-being: 2016 Report of the HHS LGBT Policy Coordinating Committee*, Dec. 6, 2016.

³ Matt Hennie, *Transgender Bathroom Backlash Grows in Georgia*, Project Q Atlanta, May 16, 2016, http://www.projectq.us/atlanta/transgender_bathroom_backlash_grows_in_georgia?gid=17800.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Cervical Cancer Rates by Race and Ethnicity*. August 20, 2015. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

⁵Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Cervical Cancer Rates by Race and Ethnicity*. August 20, 2015. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.