



January 17, 2017

U.S. Senate Committee on Finance
219 Senate Dirksen Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Member of the Senate Committee on Finance:

National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health [NLIRH] writes to express its strong **opposition to the confirmation of Tom Price** as Secretary of Health and Human Services. NLIRH is the only national reproductive justice organization dedicated to building Latina power to advance health, dignity, and justice for 28 million Latinas, their families, and communities in the United States through leadership development, community mobilization, policy advocacy, and strategic communications. 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 Latino/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 Price introduced the Empowering Patients First Act, which if passed, would have repealed the ACA and replaced it with a plan that would harm those who are struggling to make ends meet and those who are ill.¹ Due to the ACA, over 4 million Latinos/as were able to gain coverage.² 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.³ 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 have made under the ACA will be reversed if Mr. Price is confirmed.

Mr. Price's record reflects xenophobic sentiments. Mr Price is a member of the Association of American Physicians and Surgeons (AAPS).⁴ In 2005, the namesake

¹ Empowering Patients First Act, H.R. 2300, 114th Cong. (2015).

² U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The ACA is Working for the Latino Community. July 21, 2016. <http://www.hhs.gov/healthcare/facts-and-features/fact-sheets/aca-working-latino-community/index.html?language=es>.

³ National Council of La Raza and Latino Decisions. Press Briefing: The Views of Latinos on the Economy, Health Care, and the 2016 Election. October 27, 2016. <http://publications.nclr.org/bitstream/handle/123456789/1641/theviewsoflatinosontheeconomyhealthcareand2016election.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y>.

⁴ John Commins, *AAPS Membership May be Liability for Price, Says Group's Leader*, Health Media Leaders, Dec. 7, 2016. <http://www.healthleadersmedia.com/physician-leaders/aaps-membership-may-be-liability-price-says-groups-leader#>



journal of this organization published an article advocating for rescinding the citizenship of individuals born in the United States whose parents are foreign-born.⁵ Mr. Price has also 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.⁶ His support of anti-immigrant legislation will impact the ability of HHS to engage in health issues concerning immigrant communities in this country.

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.⁷ 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.⁸ Mr. Price has voted against legislation that would ban employment discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation⁹ and legislation that would fight hate crimes.¹⁰ Recently, he called the Obama administration’s guidelines allowing transgender students to use the bathroom that aligns with their gender identity as “absurd.”¹¹ 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.¹² 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.¹³ His objection to the contraceptive coverage benefit on the grounds of religious liberty¹⁴ ignores the fact that women of color had previously

⁵ Madeleine Perner Cosman, *Illegal Aliens and American Medicine*, JOURNAL OF AMERICAN PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS, 10(1); 9, 2005. Available at: <http://www.jpands.org/vol10no1/cosman.pdf>.

⁶ Birthright Citizenship Act of 2007, H.R. 1940, 110th Cong. (2007).

⁷ Nondiscrimination in Health Programs and Activities, 81 Fed. Reg. 31375 45 CFR 92 (May 18, 2016).

⁸ 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, <https://www.hhs.gov/programs/topic-sites/lgbt/reports/health-objectives-2016.html>.

⁹ Employment Non-Discrimination Act of 2007, H.R. 3685, 110th Cong. (2007).

¹⁰ Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act of 2009, H.R. 1913, 111th Cong. (2009).

¹¹ 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.

¹² NARAL Pro-Choice America, *Congressional Record on Choice, 2005-2016*.

¹³ 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. Available at <http://www.cdc.gov/cancer/cervical/statistics/race.htm>

¹⁴ Olga Khazan, *Tom Price: ‘Not One’ Woman Struggled to Afford Birth Control*, The Atlantic, Nov. 29, 2016. <http://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2016/11/tom-price-not-one-woman-cant-afford-birth-control/509003/>.



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struggled to afford this care.¹⁵ 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, including reproductive health care, for communities of color, LGBTQ communities, and women of color. If confirmed, the policies Mr. Price pursues will severely harm Latinas and their families.

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

Sincerely,

Jessica González-Rojas
Executive Director
National Latina Institute for Reproductive Health

¹⁵ Planned Parenthood Federation of America. Survey: Nearly Three in Four Voters in America Support Fully Covering Prescription Birth Control. <https://www.plannedparenthood.org/about-us/newsroom/press-releases/survey-nearly-three-four-voters-america-support-fully-covering-prescription-birth-control>. Accessed on December 12, 2016.