



January 16, 2017

To the Honorable Members of the United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

**RE: Secretary of Health and Human Services Nominee Tom Price**

Dear Senators,

No issue is of broader consequence to Equality California than ensuring that the Affordable Care Act is not repealed without a replacement that provides better healthcare for the American people. Repealing the ACA without a better replacement would threaten critical healthcare coverage for hundreds of thousands of LGBT Californians, their families, and more than 20 million people across the U.S. who have secured health insurance for the first time.

LGBT people have many of the same health conditions as the general public, of course, but they are profoundly impacted by discrimination, bullying and violence, rejection by families and communities, and lack of acceptance in employment and housing. A higher prevalence of chronic conditions such as HIV and AIDS, as well as certain kinds of cancers, take a heavy toll on LGBT people and their families. These factors are in turn compounded by institutional inequality in the workplace, substandard care by indifferent or hostile healthcare providers, and outright denial of service because of an individual's sexual orientation or gender identity. The cumulative effects of discrimination against LGBT people naturally have a terrible impact on physical and mental health and well-being.

Rep. Price's Congressional record is deeply troubling to Equality California. He has repeatedly voted against reproductive rights and opposes requiring employers to include access to birth control, sterilization and abortion in employee health care plans. He voted against a Washington D.C. law to protect women from discrimination by their employers for their family planning decisions. He also opposed a proposed ban on LGBT workplace discrimination, voted against repeal of Don't Ask Don't Tell, and opposed hate crimes legislation on the basis of sexual orientation, gender identity and disability, which would also protect people living with HIV and AIDS.

In addition Rep. Price has cosponsored two separate bills to defund Planned Parenthood, which is of profound concern to Equality California because Planned Parenthood provides vital healthcare to women and tens of thousands of LGBT people. Planned Parenthood also offers transgender health services, lifesaving cancer screenings, STI testing and treatment, and sexual healthcare information and education.

Beyond the votes he has cast, nominee Price has made a number of public statements that clearly reflect hostility and disdain for LGBT Americans. He said the 2016 Supreme Court ruling for marriage equality was "not only a sad day for marriage, but a further judicial destruction of our entire system of checks and balances." He also joined an *amicus* brief to the Supreme Court in the Gavin Grimm case in support the

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Massachusetts school board's policy of segregating transgender students from their peers, and called Justice Department guidelines on allowing transgender people to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity "absurd."

We are writing today to request that in his confirmation hearing and in one-on-one meetings with him, that you press for answers to the following questions:

- What is his level of commitment to existing HHS policies to that provide full LGBT access to healthcare and ending discrimination against LGBT Americans?
- What is his commitment to the National HIV/AIDS Strategy and to efforts to end the epidemic by supporting effective treatment of HIV and effective prevention through pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP)?
- Will he commit to continuing current programs that focus on addressing HIV and AIDS—particularly those aimed at Black and Latino men who have sex with men, and transgender women of color?
- Will he support the continuation of current HHS efforts to prevent gender-based and intimate-partner violence, which is a major predictor of HIV infection for women and girls, including transgender women and girls?
- Does he agree that the changes to the Medicare National Coverage Determination appropriately provide Medicare coverage of gender transition-related care?
- Does he support continued HHS funding for dedicated funding for LGBT senior citizens?
- Does he support continued federal health care benefits for same-sex spouses of federal employees?

Equality California is making these requests because if confirmed as Health and Human Services Secretary, Tom Price will oversee the issues most fundamental to the health and well-being of every LGBT American.

Sincerely,



Rick Zbur  
Executive Director  
Equality California



Valerie Ploumpis  
National Policy Director  
Equality California

cc: Senator Diane Feinstein  
cc: Senator Kamala Harris