

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 15, 2024

The Honorable Xavier Becerra
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Becerra,

We write to request that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) allocate adequate resources for outreach to and enrollment assistance for DACA recipients newly eligible for Affordable Care Act (ACA) health insurance. We deeply appreciate the recent finalization of the regulation that expanded eligibility to this population. It is an essential step towards health equity and improving the well-being of our communities. For this expansion to be successful, HHS must ensure that every newly eligible individual is fully informed and supported during the enrollment process.

Starting on November 1, 2024, DACA recipients will be able to enroll in health coverage through Healthcare.gov or their state-based marketplace. While this timeline aligns with the annual open enrollment period, DACA recipients will be simultaneously eligible for a special enrollment period, allowing them to start using health insurance benefits by December 1, 2024. Given this unique and time-sensitive opportunity, it is imperative that DACA recipients know of this opportunity, are informed about their eligibility, and are able to navigate the registration process so that they can take full advantage of their new access to medical care.

To accomplish this goal, HHS should invest resources into paid media outreach, funding to community organizations to disseminate information, and HHS staff time into a targeted outreach program for newly eligible DACA recipients. Given that most DACA recipients are identified as a “hard to reach” population, HHS must ensure information is not only available but actively and prominently disseminated. With a plurality of DACA recipients preferring to get information about health coverage from a government website, HHS needs to ensure this information is not only available, but actively publicized and promoted to them.

It is equally important that anyone assisting in outreach and enrollment is well trained given the newness of this policy. Call center employees should receive training on the program and newly eligible population. Individuals providing enrollment assistance, including navigators, certified application counselors, brokers and agents, should also receive updated training. HHS should proactively take steps to prevent any attempts at scams or fraud of newly eligible DACA recipients, given reports of unauthorized plan switching, as well as scammers targeting DACA

recipients, both online and through other methods. Content should include options for enrollment, the Special Enrollment Period, and the fact that individuals earning below the poverty line but ineligible for Medicaid because of their immigration status may still enroll in subsidized marketplace plans.

We also urge you to minimize the chances of DACA recipients encountering barriers to enrollment in healthcare.gov or marketplace coverage. We are well aware of the issues that healthcare.gov had during its 2013 launch and that immigrants continue to face challenges verifying their identity or status. HHS should allocate adequate time to test all technical updates to its eligibility system, work with the Department of Homeland Security to proactively address any potential verification errors, and provide technical assistance to state-based exchanges.

For that reason, we ask that you address the following questions:

1. How do you plan to inform and support newly eligible individuals of and during the enrollment process, following the recent finalization of the regulation expanding eligibility to this population?
2. What steps will HHS take to ensure that DACA recipients are aware of the special enrollment period, allowing them to secure health insurance benefits by December 1, 2024, if enrolled by November 15, 2024?
3. What resources will you allocate for paid media outreach, funding to community organizations, and targeted outreach programs for newly eligible DACA recipients?
4. Considering that most DACA recipients are identified as a “hard to reach” population, how will you ensure that information is actively and prominently disseminated to that group?
5. What proactive measures will be taken to prevent scams or fraud targeting DACA recipients during the enrollment process?
6. How do you plan to minimize barriers to enrollment in healthcare.gov or marketplace coverage, given past challenges and ongoing issues with identity verification?

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration on this important issue and we look forward to working with you to ensure DACA recipients have access to their health insurance benefits.

Sincerely,



Cory A. Booker
United States Senator



Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress

Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

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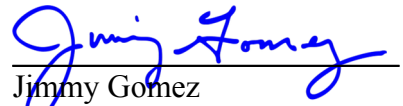
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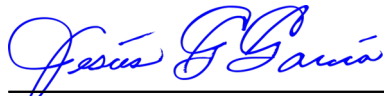
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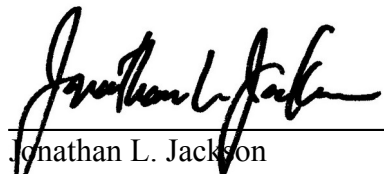
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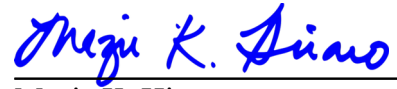
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Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



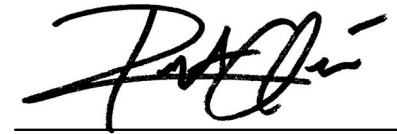
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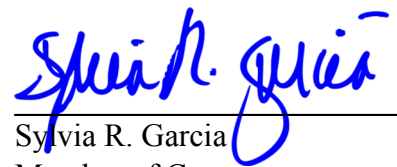
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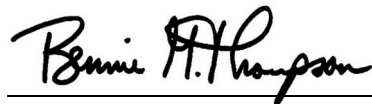
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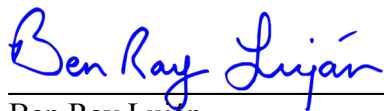
Mark Takano
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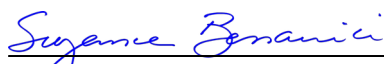
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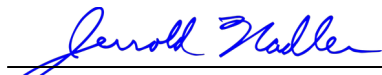
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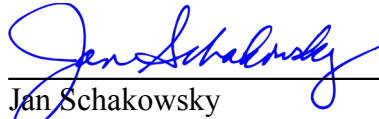
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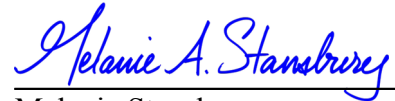
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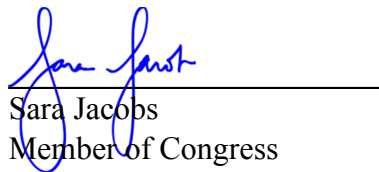
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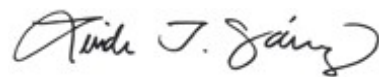
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United States Senator



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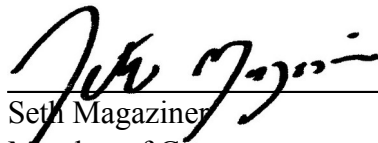
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Andrea Salinas
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Bill Pascrell Jr

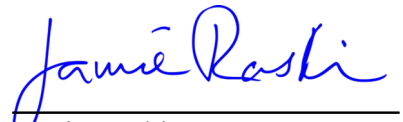
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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Judy Chu

Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



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