

# Congress of the United States

## Washington, DC 20515

March 4, 2021

Acting Secretary Norris Cochran  
The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear Secretary Cochran,

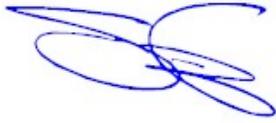
As you know, a week before the end of his presidency, the Trump administration finalized an unlawful and dangerous rule that would end nondiscrimination protections within social service programs. If this rule were to go into effect, it would eliminate critical protections preventing providers from discriminating on the basis of sexual orientation and gender identity when providing Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) grant-funded services. The rule also included language essentially ignoring the Supreme Court's marriage equality decisions.

The Trump administration's sanctioning of taxpayer-funded intolerance against people who receive services from HHS grant programs, including youth and families in the child welfare system, youth experiencing homelessness, and elder Americans, is reprehensible. Upon the rule's initial proposal, over 100 members of Congress called for its withdrawal to halt a harmful disruption to children, adults, and families across the country. Under the shameful practices perpetuated by the Trump administration, a federally-funded foster care agency could refuse to place children with a married same-sex couple or a transgender teen could be turned away at an HHS-funded shelter. During these unprecedented times we should be finding ways to support our citizens, not discriminating against them under the guise of religious liberty.

In response to a lawsuit filed by foster youth groups as well as LGBTQ advocacy organizations, HHS agreed to a court order that immediately stayed the effective date of this anti-LGBTQ rule. The effective date was extended by 180 days to August 2021 giving HHS time to reverse the rule.

We applaud the Biden-Harris administration for hitting pause on this harmful Trump-era rule, and it is our sincere hope that your agency will move forward expeditiously to ensure that all persons receive equal treatment under the law. Congress looks forward to working with you to make that a reality.

Sincerely,



Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress

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David Cicilline  
Member of Congress

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Tom Malinowski  
Member of Congress

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Bonnie Watson Coleman  
Member of Congress

\_\_\_\_\_/s/\_\_\_\_\_  
Cynthia Axne  
Member of Congress

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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress

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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress

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Mark Pocan  
Member of Congress

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Katie Porter  
Member of Congress

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Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress

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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress

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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress

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Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress

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Karen Bass  
Member of Congress

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Debbie Wasserman Schultz  
Member of Congress

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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress

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Adriano Espaillat  
Member of Congress

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress

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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress

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Mondaire Jones  
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Pramila Jayapal  
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Member of Congress

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Jahana Hayes  
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Jennifer Wexton  
Member of Congress

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David Scott  
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Julia Brownley  
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Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress

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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress

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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress

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Marie Newman  
Member of Congress