

Opening Statement
Health Subcommittee Hearing: Oversight of the Department of Health and Human Services
Rep. Ben Ray Lujan
February 15, 2018

Thank you, Secretary Azar, for joining us today.

In previous hearings, you told some of my Democratic colleagues that we all have shared values on health care. I'm interested to hear more about how the Trump administration's budget reflects these shared values, or perhaps explore where we in fact are not aligned.

I believe health care is a right, not a luxury.

I believe health care should be affordable – no matter your income.

Accessible – no matter where you live.

And high quality – no matter how you are insured.

The President's budget proposal continues the Republican obsession with repealing the Affordable Care Act, which would strip health care away from tens of millions of Americans.

Let me be clear. Those are not my values.

I believe it's a tragedy that seniors all across this country have to choose between rent and their prescription drugs.

I believe it's a tragedy that before the Affordable Care Act, more American's filed bankruptcy for medical debt than anything else.

I believe it's a tragedy that before Medicaid expansion, paying for in-patient opioid treatment was out of reach for so many middle-class families.

The Affordable Care Act and Medicaid expansion provided a historic step forward in addressing the health disparities have plagued our communities.

A health care system that addresses these issues reflect my values.

This Trump budget dismantles Medicaid and the Affordable Care Act. It represents an attack on working families and lifesaving programs.

The Trump budget cuts care for children, families, women, and people with disabilities while once again favoring the wealthy and corporations.

Those are certainly not my values.