

August 18, 2021

The Honorable Frank Pallone
Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
House of Representatives
2125 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy and Commerce
House of Representatives
2322 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Pallone and Ranking Member Rodgers:

We are writing in regard to H.R. 2503, the Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2021. This bipartisan legislation, sponsored by Representative Cheri Bustos and cosponsored by Representatives Tom Cole, Jim McGovern, and Markwayne Mullin, would provide planning grants and technical assistance to help state, local, and tribal governments address social determinants of health (SDOH) and improve the return on investment for health and social services programs. In previous correspondence, Western Governors expressed support for H.R. 4004, the Social Determinants Accelerator Act of 2019, which sought to advance the same objectives as H.R. 2503.

Like H.R. 4004, H.R. 2503 is consistent with Western Governors' policy. It would allocate \$25 million to solving societal health care challenges by establishing a Social Determinants Accelerator Interagency Council and a grant program for jurisdictions to develop social determinants accelerator plans. These plans would facilitate the implementation of locally designed, cross-sector interventions and strategies and provide important data on the cost-effectiveness and outcomes of these innovative approaches. In WGA Policy Resolution 2020-05, *Physical and Behavioral Health Care in Western States*, Western Governors encourage Congress to adopt legislation that empowers states and local governments to address persistent economic and social conditions – such as limited access to health care providers, stable housing, reliable transportation, healthy foods, and high-quality education – that often obstruct positive health outcomes. Such legislation would assist states in developing plans to target social determinants that negatively affect health outcomes for western populations.

The legislation also seeks to enlist state and local governments as partners in identifying opportunities for the federal government to bolster health and social outcomes of individuals enrolled in Medicaid. This provision is consistent with WGA Policy Resolution 2020-01, *Strengthening the State-Federal Relationship*, as the improvement of state-federal communication and coordination is among the Governors' highest priorities. We welcome our role as partners with the federal government, especially concerning Medicaid, a program that is administered and partially funded by the states.

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Western Governors appreciate the Committee's leadership on health care and your efforts to improve health and social outcomes. We encourage the Committee's consideration of H.R. 2503 as a tool to help state, local, and tribal governments better address SDOH. Please do not hesitate to contact us if we may be of assistance as you contemplate improvements to our nation's health care system.

Sincerely,



Brad Little
Governor of Idaho
Chair, WGA



Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado
Vice Chair, WGA

cc: The Honorable Cheri Bustos
The Honorable Tom Cole
The Honorable Jim McGovern
The Honorable Markwayne Mullin