

The **UNITED STATES SENATE**  
**COMMITTEE on FINANCE**  
CHAIRMAN RON **WYDEN**, D-OREGON

[www.finance.senate.gov](http://www.finance.senate.gov) | @SenateFinance



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Taylor Harvey (202) 224-4515

March 1, 2022

## **Wyden Statement at Finance Committee Hearing on HHS Nominees**

### *As Prepared for Delivery*

This morning, the committee will begin consideration of three nominations for the Department of Health and Human Services. First up, January Contreras is President Biden's nominee to serve as Health and Human Services Assistant Secretary for Children and Families. Over decades in public service, Ms. Contreras has been a champion for vulnerable families, women and children. That makes her an ideal choice for this role.

Similarly, Rebecca Jones Gaston, nominated to serve as Commissioner for Children, Youth and Families, brings decades of experience in roles that are all about looking after the vulnerable. She currently serves as Child Welfare Director for Oregon's Department of Human Services.

One of the key challenges for both these nominees will be continuing the implementation of the Family First Prevention Services Act. That law is a landmark overhaul of our child welfare system, which this committee wrote on a bipartisan basis. It's designed to help children stay with their families whenever it's safe and possible, rather than breaking families up by default.

Implementing Family First is a big challenge that brings together the federal government, states and organizations all over the country. It takes a lot of hard work. Fortunately, these two nominees are up for the challenge. Ms. Jones Gaston has even been in charge of implementing the law in Oregon. I look forward to working with them after they're confirmed.

Finally, Robert Gordon is President Biden's nominee to serve as HHS Assistant Secretary for Financial Resources. Mr. Gordon has a wealth of experience managing large agencies with big budgets. He directed Michigan's Department of Health & Human Services. He held top roles at the Department of Education and the Office of Management and Budget. He clerked at the Supreme Court and even worked here on Capitol Hill.

All of this experience will help him succeed in the key challenge he'll face when confirmed: upholding the guarantee of Medicare, Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program, and protecting those programs for future generations.

I'm going to support all three nominees when the committee votes today, and I urge my colleagues to do the same.

###