

WASHINGTON – Representative Xavier Becerra (CA – 31) was the opening speaker at the National Academy of Social Insurance’s 15th annual conference that began today. The theme of this year’s conference is “Strengthening Community: Social Insurance in a Diverse America.”

Speaking at the National Press Club to a crowd of 200, Rep. Becerra, a member of the House Committee on Ways and Means and the Subcommittee on Social Security, discussed the nation’s Social Security system and how this country’s evolving demographics present new challenges and new opportunities as Congress works to ensure the 70-year-old institution’s solvency.

His speech paid particular attention to the importance of securing the Social Security system for women and minorities – two groups that disproportionately rely on Social Security as their main source of retirement income.

Rep. Becerra also pointed out his belief that the Republican-controlled Congress continues to chip away at social insurance programs. “My concern as a policy maker is that so many of the reform ideas in Congress affects the very aspect of social insurance that makes it work for all Americans,” Rep. Becerra said. “That is: the erosion of guaranteed benefits.

“Services like Social Security and Medicare have successfully protected millions of Americans from risk because the benefits are defined and guaranteed ... Without Social Security, 52 percent of white women, 65 percent of African American women and 61 percent of Latino women over the age 65 would live in poverty.”