

REP. BECERRA STATEMENT AT JOINT HEARING ON THE BUILDING OF SOCIAL SECURITY'S NEW NATIONAL COMPUTER SYSTEM

WASHINGTON, DC—Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Ranking Member Xavier Becerra (CA-31), issued the following statement **as prepared for delivery** today at a joint Subcommittee hearing on managing costs and mitigating delays in the building of Social Security's new National Computer Center:

“Thank you, Mr. Chairman. This is a timely topic for our first hearing. I appreciate that you are continuing the tradition of this Subcommittee of conducting bipartisan oversight of the Social Security Administration in the interests of the American people.

“The new data center that SSA is constructing, in conjunction with the General Services Administration, is vitally important to the continued operation of the Social Security Administration. Today, 54 million people rely on SSA to keep American's promise to them to deliver income each month, after having contributed for years from their paychecks.

“In addition, 160 million workers rely on SSA to keep accurate records of their earnings, so in the future they will receive the full benefit they have earned.

“We know they will receive the benefits they have earned because their contributions over the years have built up a Trust Fund with over \$2.6 trillion in Treasury bonds – the safest investment there is, sought out by investors throughout the world.

“Today, it is not an exaggeration to say that Social Security and the Social Security number touch virtually every American.

“I think we can all agree about the importance of this data center replacement project to the American people. SSA's existing primary data center is nearing the end of its useful life and is increasingly vulnerable to catastrophic failure.

“Congress acted wisely by responding swiftly to the need for the replacement center, by providing full funding for construction – and a down payment on equipping the center – in the Recovery Act.

“This funding has allowed the project to get started immediately, which reduces the danger that SSA will be without full data center capability, and building the data center

will create jobs that strengthen our economic recovery.

“I understand that there have been some delays in selecting a site for the new center, and am pleased that things are once again moving ahead. I hope our witnesses will give us more information on the project’s timeline and budget, as well as their plans for preventing future delays.

“Keeping to project timelines is critical to ensuring that SSA can continue to effectively serve workers and beneficiaries, today and in the future.

“I look forward to hearing a progress report on the project today.”