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Contact: Courtney Armstrong
courtney@first5association.org

First 5 Association Congratulates Governor-elect Xavier Becerra, Urges a New Era of Leadership for California's Youngest Children

Avo Makdessian, Executive Director of the First 5 Association of California, today issued the following statement on the election of Xavier Becerra as California's next governor.

"First 5 Association of California congratulates Governor-elect Xavier Becerra on his election. Throughout his career, he has championed health care access and working families, guided by the belief that it's better to prevent problems than to fix them later. Early childhood investment is prevention at its core. When we invest in children's earliest years, we help them grow into thriving youth and adults. First 5 Network is ready to work immediately with the incoming Becerra administration to make young children a central priority. With a First 5 in every California county, the new administration has a nimble partner to improve the trajectory of millions of children.

"Governor-elect Becerra takes office as California families face acute and growing challenges. Federal cuts to Medi-Cal and food assistance threaten the health and stability of millions of California families. More than half of California parents say it is difficult or impossible to get mental health care for their child. Counties have lost much of the funding for early childhood mental health services. Child care remains underfunded and out of reach, and First 5s are doing everything to braid together support for the families hit hardest by poverty.

As we enter the 2027-28 legislative session, we call on policymakers to build on the state's First 5 infrastructure and to partner with First 5s in designing a support system that starts with what children and families need."

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About First 5 Association of California
First 5 Association of California represents First 5 commissions across the state. Together, First 5 supports over 1.2 million children and families each year, advancing policies and investments that ensure young children are healthy, safe, and ready to learn. The Association works to advance state and federal public policies and funding that support California's young children and families. Our policy work is informed by local communities and local First 5 commissions and is grounded in a whole child / whole family lens. We do this while centering the

fact that low-income communities, communities of color, and historically marginalized Californians face disproportionate impacts due to systemic racism, wealth inequality, and environmental hazards. Learn more at www.first5association.org.