

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 11, 2019

The Honorable Donald J. Trump
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, DC 20410

Dear President Trump,

We write to raise our strong concerns with Seema Verma's professional judgement and ask you to remove and replace her as the Administrator for the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS). Verma has consistently shown a lack of good judgement when it comes to responsible stewardship of taxpayer dollars, has grossly misused CMS funding, and has reliably prioritized herself over the American people.

Beginning in March 2019, reports surfaced regarding Verma's spending priorities. Instead of using CMS dollars on CMS programs, Verma spent over \$3 million on contracts to public relation free-lancers, communication consultants, and media advisors.¹ Many of these contracts were given to individuals that reportedly were denied employment as government staffers, were former colleagues of the Administrator, and whose previous experience and relevance was as Republican campaign operatives, unrelated to the mission and goals of CMS.²

Under questions by members of Congress at the Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Oversight and Investigations in October, Verma then testified under oath that "all of the contracts that we have at CMS are based on promoting the work of CMS."³

However, recent reporting of these contracts, including the release of internal documents clarifying the scope and purpose of the contracts, appears to contradict the Administrator's testimony. In November, emails between CMS staffers, outside consultants, and Verma herself indicated the role of the consultants was to promote and advance the public perception of the Administrator.⁴ The consultants developed detailed plans to raise Verma's public image by granting interviews to Glamour, Women's Day, and securing her position on a "Power Women"

¹ https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/top-trump-health-official-spent-3-million-on-consultants-who-helped-boost-her-visibility/2019/11/20/67c342c2-0ae8-11ea-97ac-a7ccc8dd1ebc_story.html

² Id.; <https://www.politico.com/story/2019/03/29/seema-verma-contracts-1306652>

³ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OT-egpXPGno&feature=emb_title

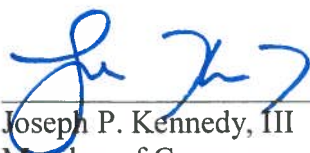
⁴ <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/11/20/contractor-glamour-magazine-profile-seema-verma-071727>

list.⁵ Additionally, these contracts helped garner invitations to exclusive events, such as her attendance at the Kennedy Center Honors.⁶

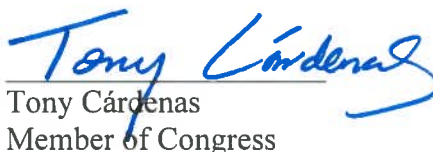
Most recently, reporting this week showed that Verma filed a claim for lost property for over \$47,000 in August.⁷ During an official trip to advance the causes of CMS the Administrator's suitcase was unfortunately stolen from her rental vehicle. Verma initially claimed \$20,000 worth of lost property in the police report immediately following the incident.⁸ However, the Administrator later claimed lost property worth more than double the initial police report and asked the federal government, which is funded by taxpayer dollars, to refund her for that loss.

Administrator Verma has shown a pattern of incredibly poor and misguided judgement when spending taxpayer dollars. Verma continues to put her needs ahead of those she serves. We urge your immediate attention to our concerns and ask for swift action in removing Administrator Verma from her post.


Sincerely,



Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

⁵ Id.; https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/top-trump-health-official-spent-3-million-on-consultants-who-helped-boost-her-visibility/2019/11/20/67c342c2-0ae8-11ea-97ac-a7ccc8dd1ebc_story.html

⁶ <https://www.politico.com/news/2019/12/07/medicare-chief-asked-taxpayers-to-cover-stolen-jewelry-077761>

⁷ Id.

⁸ Id.