

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2018

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce, Justice,
Commerce, Science and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
H-310 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
U.S. House of Representatives
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano:

We are writing to express our strong support for the Youth Mentoring Grant program managed by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP). As you develop the Fiscal Year 2019 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request at least \$120 million in funding for this important program, which supports the implementation, delivery, and enhancement of evidence-based mentoring services to improve outcomes and ensure that at-risk or underserved youth have the supports they need to thrive.

Youth who grow up in poverty or low-resource families or communities are more likely than their peers to be at-risk for juvenile delinquency.¹ These youth are also more likely than their peers to have contact with the juvenile justice or child welfare systems. Mentoring provides an evidence-based support for youth that improves positive outcomes and can keep young people from entering the juvenile justice system. In addition, quality early interventions like mentoring that divert high-risk youth from engaging in repeat criminal offenses can save the public nearly \$5.7 million in costs over a lifetime.² This compares very favorably with the median mentoring program's yearly budget, which is under \$50,000 (two-thirds of programs are under \$100,000), these programs are performing critical services for our young people with very little.

Youth mentoring is an important support that improves positive social development and behaviors in young people. Mentoring has a positive effect on students that are at risk of falling off track. Young people who meet regularly with their mentors are 52 percent less likely than their peers to skip a day of school and youth with recurring behavioral problems who have a mentor maintain better attitudes towards school. Youth who meet regularly with their mentors are 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs. Young people who face opportunity gaps but have mentors are 130 percent more likely to hold a leadership position. Mentors also provide youth, especially those at risk of being disconnected from school and work, with access to social capital and opportunities. Young people who face opportunity gaps but had a mentor were 55 percent more likely to enroll in college than their peers.³ Mentors prepare young people for higher education and careers by introducing youth to resources they weren't familiar with, helping them set career goals and even using their personal contacts to help connect them and find careers in industries they did not have access to within their networks.

¹ Melissa Sickmund and Charles Puzanchera, eds. *Juvenile Offenders and Victims: 2014 National Report*. National Center for Juvenile Justice, 2014.

² Mark Cohen and Alex Piquero. *New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth*. Vanderbilt University Law and Economics, 2007.

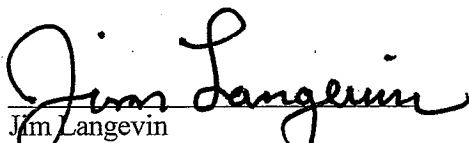
³ Mary Bruce and John Bridgeland. *The Mentoring Effect: Young People's Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*. Civic Enterprises with Hart Research Associates for MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2014.


Mentoring provides a young person at risk of engaging in negative behaviors with a powerful tool to that help them grow, develop and connect to social and economic opportunities. Despite the benefits of mentoring, nine million at-risk young people in the United States feel isolated from meaningful connections with adults outside their home, constituting a "mentoring gap" that demonstrates a need for collaboration, resources and investment in mentoring services. Funding for Youth Mentoring Programs helps close the mentoring gap and create meaningful relationships for young people at some of the most challenging times in their lives.

We respectfully request funding the Youth Mentoring Programs with at least \$120 million, which will save federal dollars over the long-term by reducing rates of incarceration, bolstering student academic achievement and creating positive outcomes for young people. For children and adolescents facing barriers to achievement and opportunity due to poverty, isolation, and other circumstances there is one proven, evidence-based intervention: a good mentor.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical request to change the lives of our young people.


Sincerely,

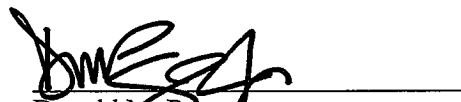

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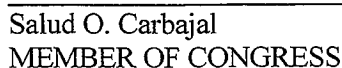

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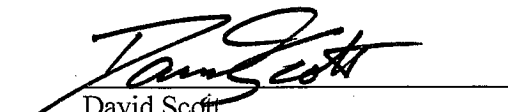

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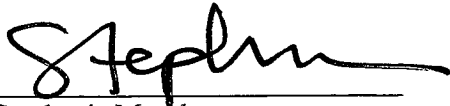
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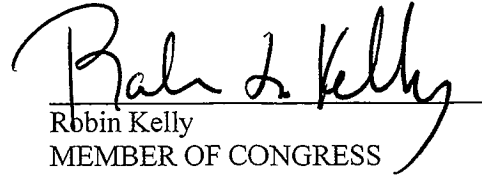
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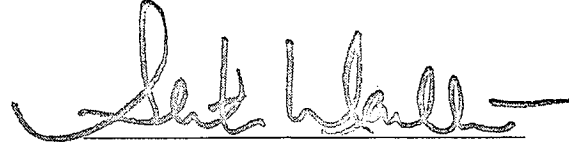
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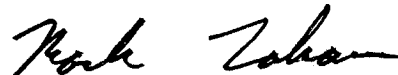
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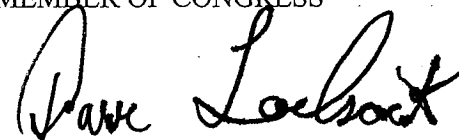
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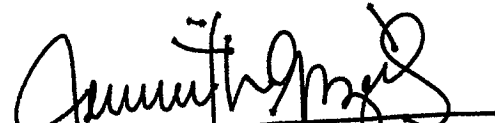
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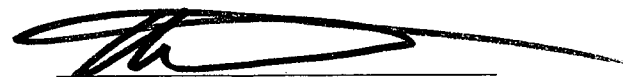
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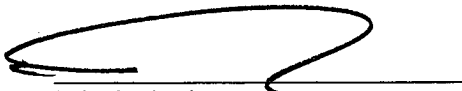
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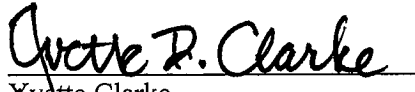
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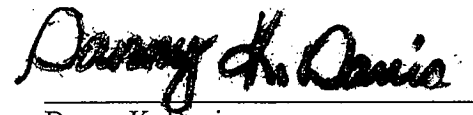

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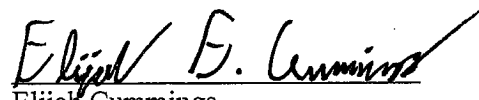

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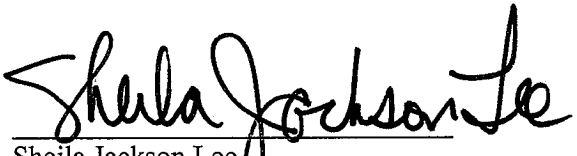

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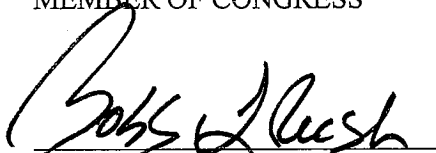

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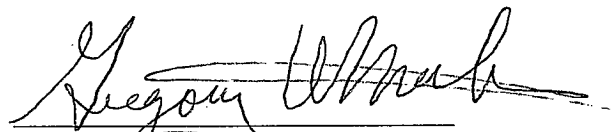

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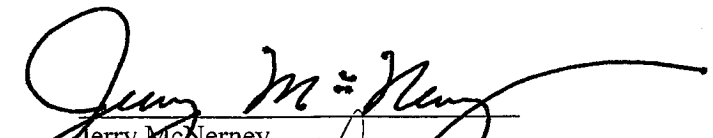

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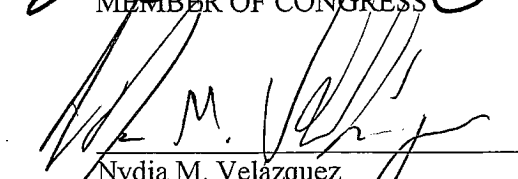

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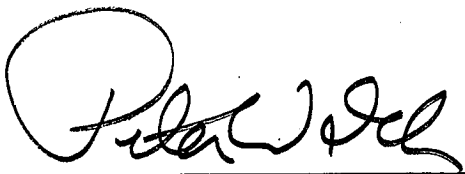

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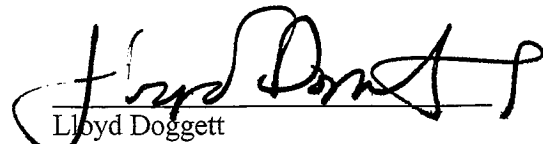

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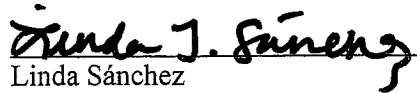

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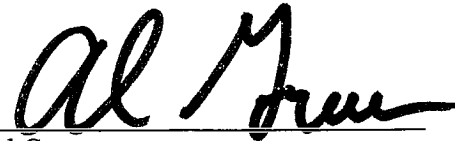
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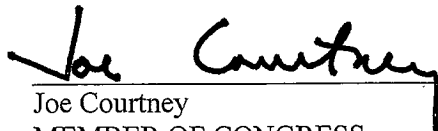
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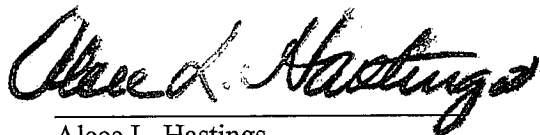
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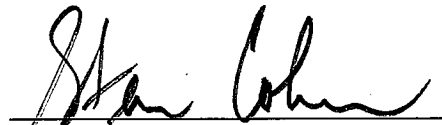
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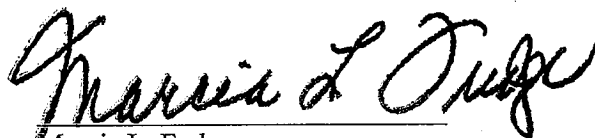
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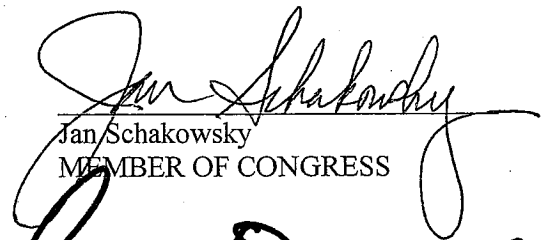
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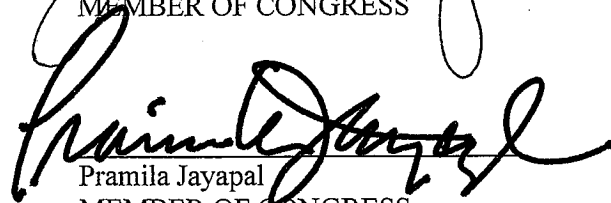
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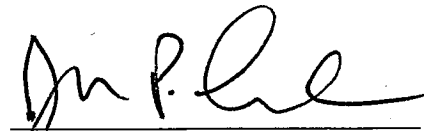
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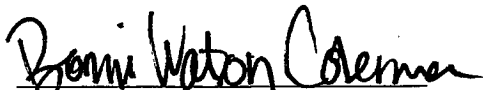
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