

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 13, 2020

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

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

Dear Chairman Serrano and Ranking Member Aderholt:

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 2021 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 academically, personally, and professionally.

Youth mentoring is an evidence-based service that improves positive life outcomes supporting young people and mentors as they navigate this critical relationship. It is a powerful factor in reducing the number of youth disconnected from school and work, in increasing social and economic mobility, and in creating a more productive and prosperous nation. Nationwide, of the young people being served by mentoring programs, 51% of them are low-income, 36% are academically at-risk, 14% are first generation to go to college, and 8% have incarcerated parents or family members^[1]. Mentoring 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 lifetime¹. This compares with the median youth mentoring program's yearly operating 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. Based on estimates, the average cost-per-youth across all mentoring programs is \$1,695 a year. However, as the percentage of higher-needs youth in a program increases, so does the average cost-per-youth. For instance, programs where 90% of the mentees being served were pregnant or parenting the average cost-per-youth went up to \$5,048 and programs where 90% of the mentees were in foster care the average cost-per-youth went up to \$2,718.² As the Youth Mentoring Grant continues to support populations of young people who need the highest levels of support, funding for these services must increase to meet their needs.

^[1] Michael Garringer, Heather McDaniel and Sam McQuillin. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America: Findings from the 2016 National Mentoring Survey*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2017.

¹ Mark Cohen and Alex Piquero. *New Evidence on the Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth*. Vanderbilt University Law and Economics, 2007.

² Mike Garringer, Heather McDaniel and Sam McQuillin. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2016.


Youth mentoring is an important support that improves positive social development and behaviors in young people. Young people in America are increasingly facing challenges related to substance abuse, mental health, and the effects of trauma—mentoring can help them navigate these complex issues at home, at school, and everywhere they go. Mentoring has a positive effect on students that are at risk of falling off track. Mentoring programs are able to support young people by focusing on specific youth outcome areas like academic achievement, career exploration, college access, leadership development, life skills, resiliency, civic engagement, and family support. 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 critical social capital. Young people who face opportunity gaps but had a mentor were 55 percent more likely to enroll in college than their peers³. 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.

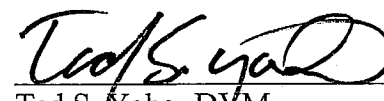
Mentoring provides young people at risk of engaging in negative behaviors with powerful tools to help them grow, develop and connect to social and economic opportunities. Despite the clear benefits of mentoring, the average mentoring program has 63 young people on its waitlist⁴, a challenge that can be solved by an increased investment in these programs. One in three young people is currently growing up without a mentor in the United States⁵, constituting a "mentoring gap" that demonstrates a need for collaboration, resources and investment in mentoring services. Funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant program 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 at least \$120 million in funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant program, 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.

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

Sincerely,


James R. Langevin
Member of Congress


Ted S. Yoho, DYM
Member of Congress

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.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid.



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



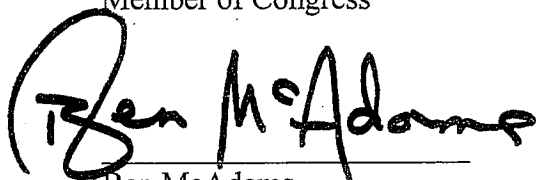
Alan Lowenthal
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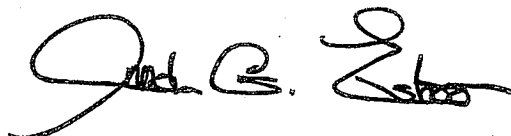
Raj Krishnamoorthi
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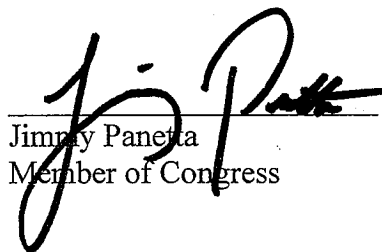
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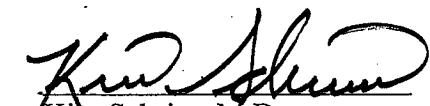
Mark Takano
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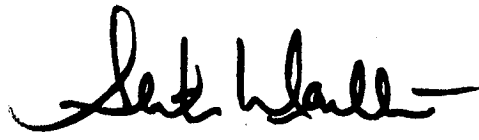
Mark DeSaulnier

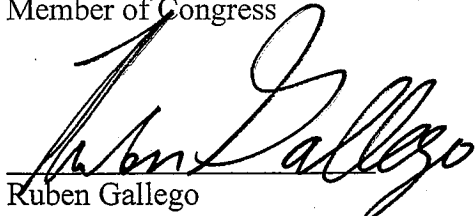
Mark DeSaulnier
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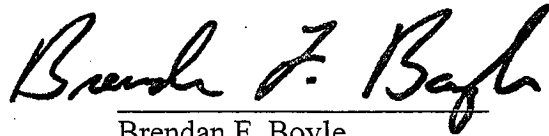
Nanette Diaz Barragan


Nanette Diaz Barragan
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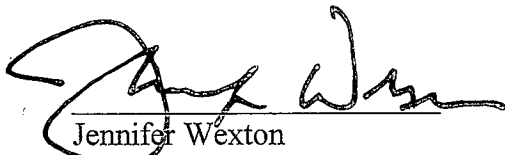

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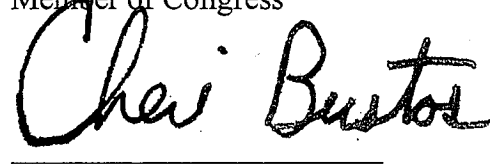

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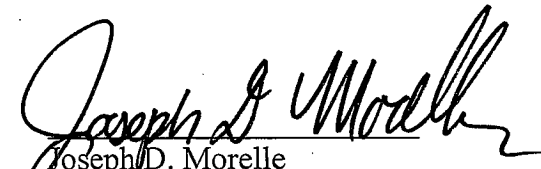

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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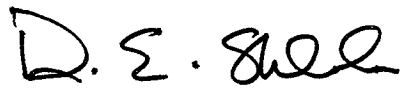

Dave Loebsack
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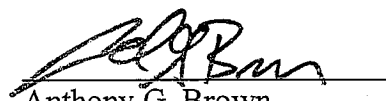

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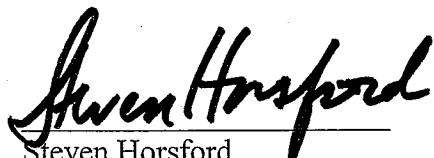

Cheri Bustos
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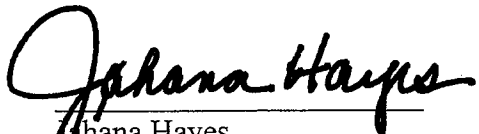

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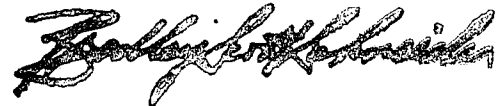

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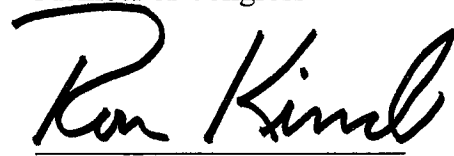

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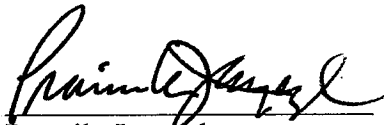

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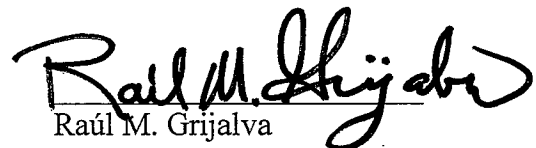

Jahana Hayes
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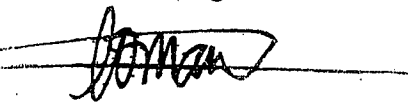

Bradley S. Schneider
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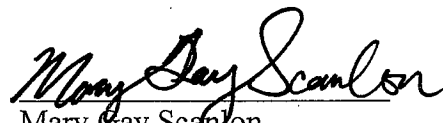

Tulsi Gabbard
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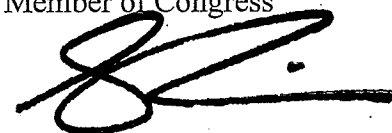

Ron Kind
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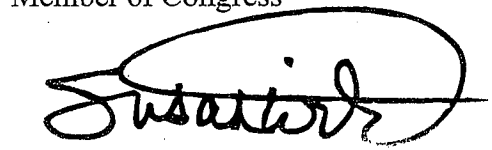

Pramila Jayapal
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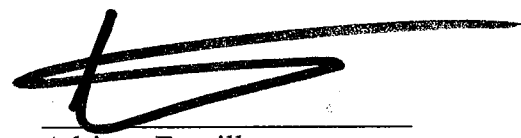

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Hank Johnson

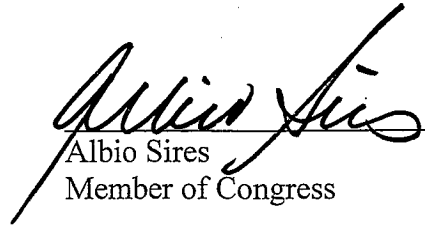
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
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Julia Brownley

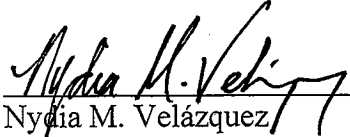
Julia Brownley
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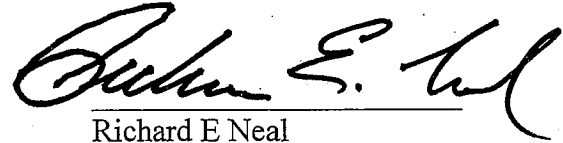


Nydia M. Velázquez
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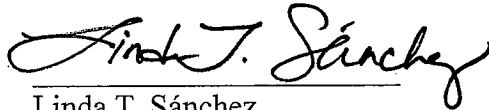
Joyce Beatty
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Rep. Lloyd Doggett
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Richard E Neal
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Linda T. Sánchez
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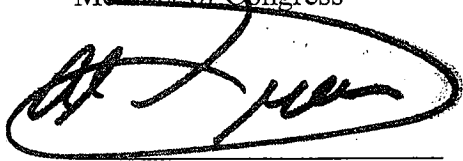


Sean Patrick Maloney
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Joe Courtney
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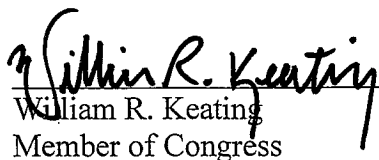
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Al Green
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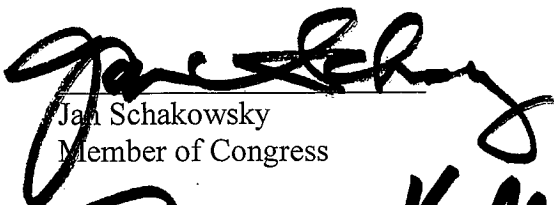
Marc Veasey
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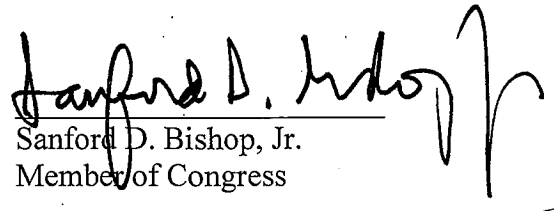
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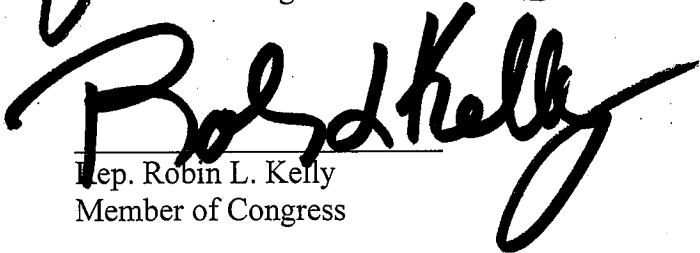
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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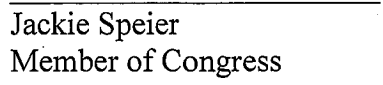
Rep. Robin L. Kelly
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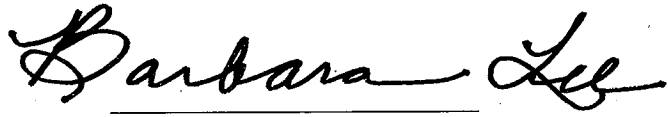
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Tony Cardenas
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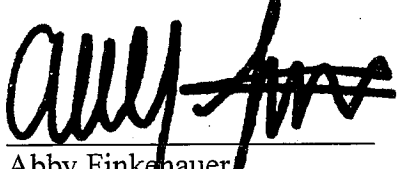
Jackie Speier
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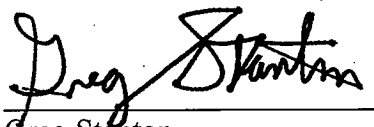
Barbara Lee
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Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



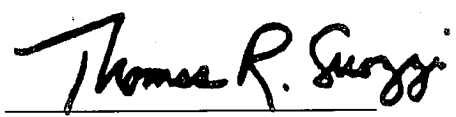
Abby Finkenauer
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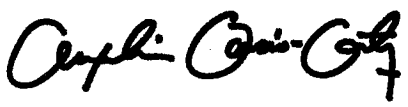
Greg Stanton
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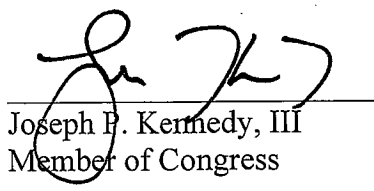
Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



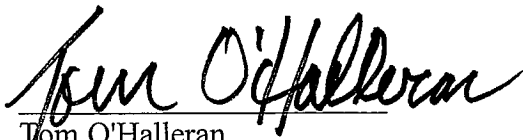
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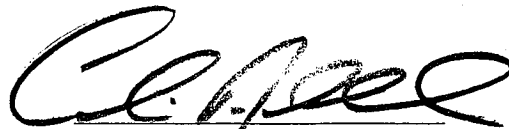
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Member of Congress



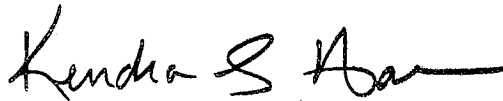
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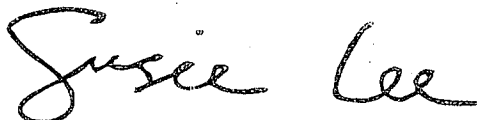
Cindy Axne
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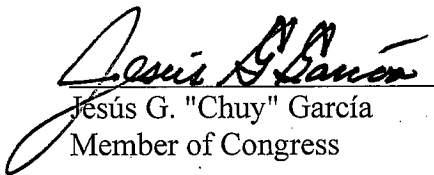
Kendra S. Horn
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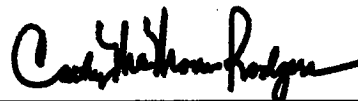
Cedric L. Richmond
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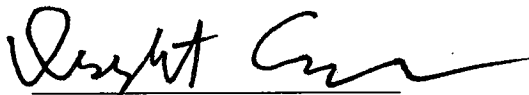
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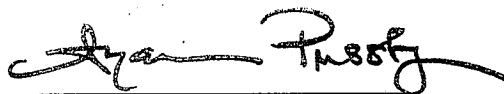
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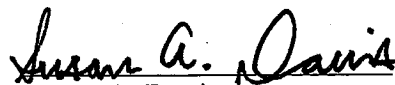
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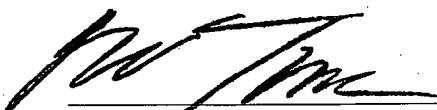
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Earl Blumenauer
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Susan A. Davis
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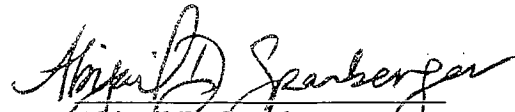


David Trone
Member of Congress



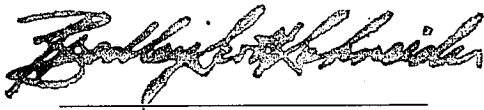
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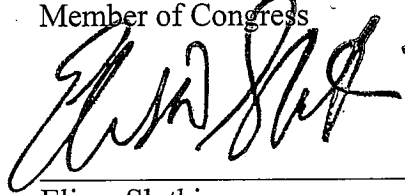

Abigail D. Spanberger
Member of Congress

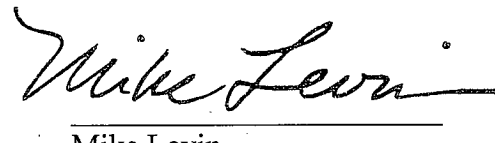

Al Lawson
Member of Congress

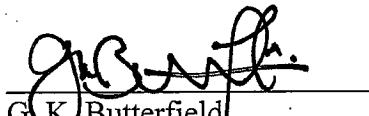

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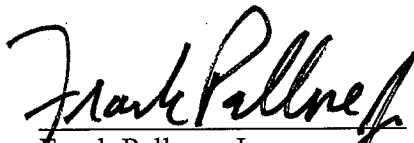

Lucy McBath
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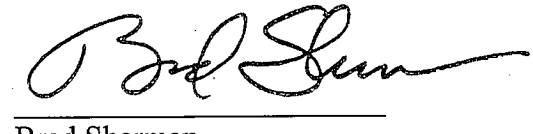

Elissa Slotkin
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Mike Levin
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G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

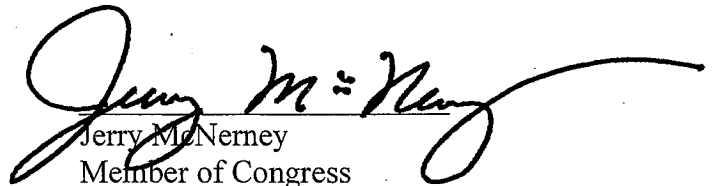

Frank Pallone, Jr.
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Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

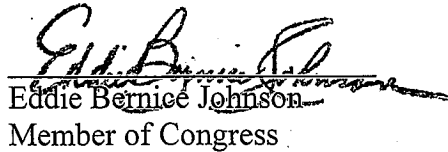

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



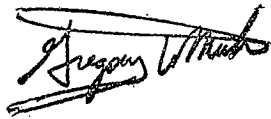
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



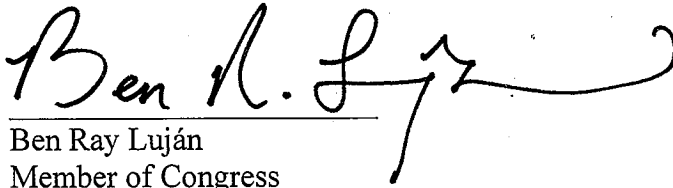
Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



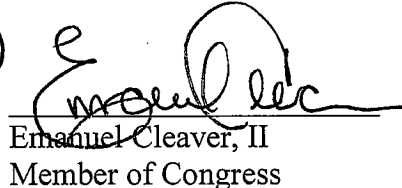
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



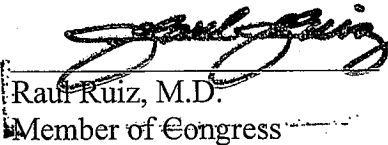
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



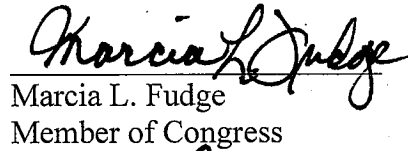
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress



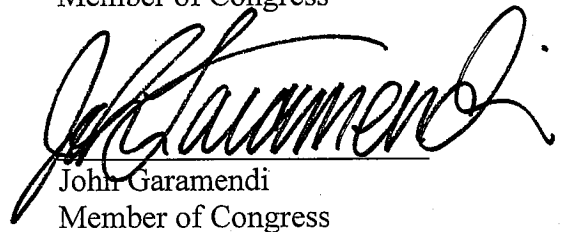
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



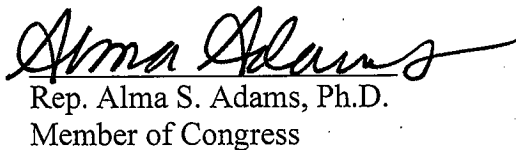
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



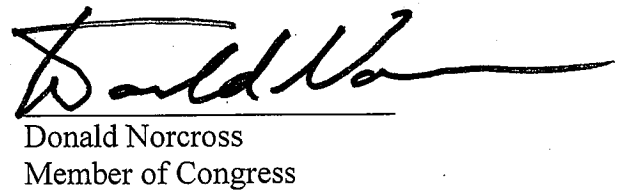
Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



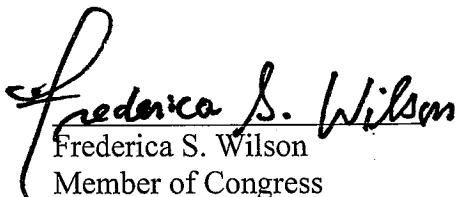
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



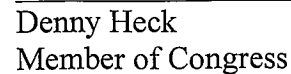
Rep. Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress