

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

April 29, 2022

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

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

Dear Chairman Cartwright 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 2023 Commerce, Justice, Science and Related Agencies Appropriations bill, we respectfully request at least \$130 million in funding for this important program, which is the only mentoring-specific line item in the federal budget. The Youth Mentoring Grant supports the implementation, delivery, and enhancement of evidence-based mentoring services to improve outcomes and ensure that at-risk and underserved youth have the supports they need to thrive academically, personally, and professionally.

Youth mentoring is an evidence-based prevention and intervention strategy that enhances life outcomes for young people and mentors. It is a powerful way to reduce the number of youth disconnected from school and work, increase social and economic mobility, and create a more productive and prosperous nation. A recent meta-analysis found that mentoring, across all studies included, had a positive effect on *all* youth outcomes included in the research.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, one in three young people in the United States will not have a mentor at some point in their childhood<sup>2</sup>, constituting a “mentoring gap” that demonstrates the need for collaborative investment in mentoring services. Disadvantaged youth in particular are more likely to turn to formal programs to access highly impactful mentors;<sup>3</sup> in the United States, of the young people served by mentoring programs, 51 percent are low-income, 36 percent are academically at-risk, 14 percent are first generation to go to college, and 8 percent have incarcerated parents or family members.<sup>4</sup>

In addition to preventing youth from entering the juvenile justice system, quality early interventions like mentoring often divert youth from recidivism. Recent research funded by OJJDP even found that mentoring programs could potentially provide a benefit of three times the public expenditure, for every day in jail that program participants avoid.<sup>5</sup> Notably, however, programs that serve more children with

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<sup>1</sup> Raposa, Elizabeth B., et. al. *The Effects of Youth Mentoring Programs: A Meta-analysis of Outcome Studies*. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Michael Garringer, Heather McDaniel and Sam McQuillin. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America: Findings from the 2016 Youth Mentoring Survey*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2017.

<sup>3</sup> Bruce, Mary and Bridgeland, John, and Civic Enterprises, in association with Hart Research Associates. *The Mentoring Effect: Young People’s Perspectives on the Outcomes and Availability of Mentoring*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2014.

<sup>4</sup> Michael Garringer, Heather McDaniel and Sam McQuillin. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America: Findings from the 2016 Youth Mentoring Survey*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2017.

<sup>5</sup> Blakeslee, Jennifer E., and Keller, Thomas E. *Extending A Randomized Trial of the My Life Mentoring Model for Youth in Foster Care to Evaluate Long-Term Effects on Offending in Young Adulthood*. National Criminal Justice Reference Service,

adverse child experiences require additional funding. A recent study showed that in programs where 90% of mentees were pregnant or parenting, the average cost-per-youth increased nearly \$2,500.<sup>6</sup> As programs continue to support as many young people with the highest need as possible, funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant program must increase.

Mentorship promotes positive social development and behaviors in young people. With youth in America facing serious challenges related to substance abuse, mental health, and the effects of trauma—all exacerbated by the long-term effects of the COVID-19 lockdown and pandemic – a trusting relationship with an adult can help them manage a myriad of complex and difficult issues. For example:

- Youth mentoring programs of all types have the ability to prevent and help youth cope with depressive symptoms, and have found particular success in improving mental health symptoms in partnership with other professional helping systems, such as schools. It can also reduce mental health stigma and increase treatment entry and adherence.
- Young people facing risk of not completing high school but who had a mentor are more likely to enroll in college, participate in extracurricular activities, hold a leadership position, and volunteer. School-based programs can have a positive impact on truancy and absenteeism, scholastic efficacy, school-related misconduct, and peer support.
- Mentoring can be integrated into multi-component violence prevention efforts and offer comprehensive support to youth at risk for committing violence or victimization. It serves as one of the few prevention and intervention strategies that can effectively address multiple risk and protective factors simultaneously, and has also been found to reduce aggressive behaviors such as fighting, bullying, and delinquency.
- Mentors support youth in career exploration and early employment experiences around providing social-emotional support and hands-on skill development. Mentoring young employees leads to higher retention rates, wage increases, employee satisfaction, and direction in building a career or educational journey.
- By senior year of high school, almost 70 percent of students in the U.S. have drunk alcohol, about half have taken an illegal drug and more than 20 percent will have used a prescription drug for a nonprescribed purpose.<sup>7</sup> Youth who meet regularly with their mentor are 46% less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs.

Despite the clear benefits, the average mentoring program has 63 young people on their waitlist<sup>8</sup>- and recent reports and studies have found that inflationary costs and workforce shortages due to the COVID-19 pandemic have prevented a full recovery in the nonprofit sector. This increase in funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant Program will help close the mentoring gap and create meaningful relationships that will help youth recover and put them on a track to academic, personal, and professional success.

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2018.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Garringer, Heather McDaniel and Sam McQuillin. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2016.

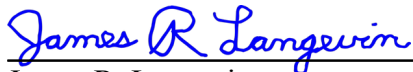
<sup>7</sup> Johnston, L. D., O'Malley, P. M., Miech, R. A., Bachman, J. G., & Schulenberg, J. E. (2014). Monitoring the future national results on adolescent drug use: Overview of key findings, 2013. Ann Arbor, MI: Institute for Social Research, The University of Michigan.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

We respectfully request at least \$130 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 enabling positive health and psychosocial outcomes for young people.

Thank you for your consideration of this critical request to support our at-risk youth.

Sincerely,



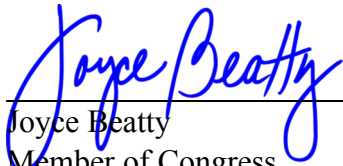
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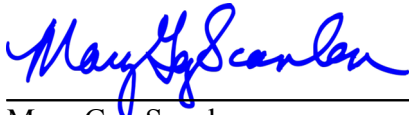
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Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



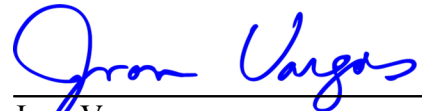
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Jenniffer González-Colón  
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Robin L. Kelly  
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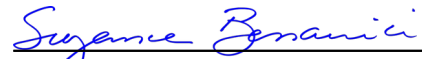
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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



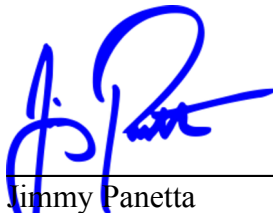
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Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



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Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



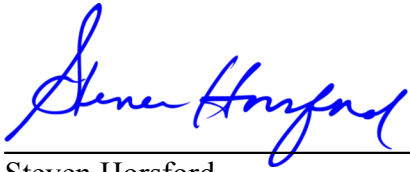
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Jimmy Panetta  
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Jahana Hayes  
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Steven Horsford  
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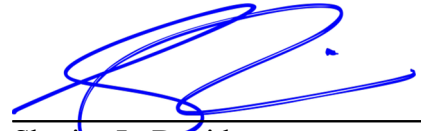
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Angie Craig  
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
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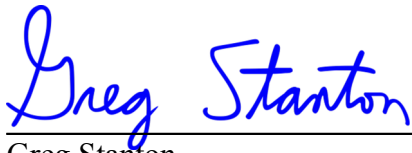
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Val Butler Demings  
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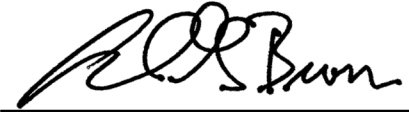
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Tom Malinowski  
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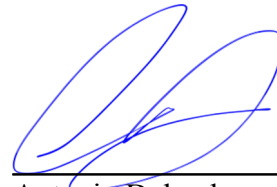
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Tom O'Halleran  
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Adam Smith  
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Antonio Delgado  
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Dean Phillips  
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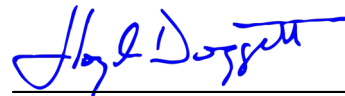
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Lizzie Fletcher  
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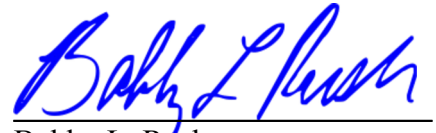
Kathy E. Manning  
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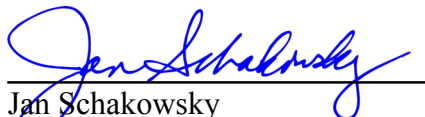
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Cynthia Axne  
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Bobby L. Rush  
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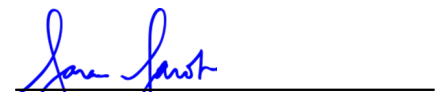
  
Alan Lowenthal  
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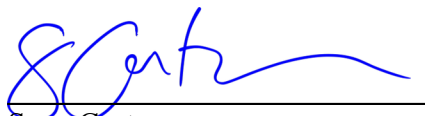
  
Brendan F. Boyle  
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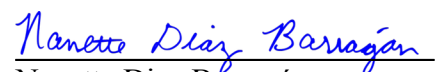
  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

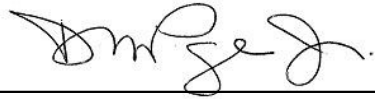
  
Lori Trahan  
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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress

  
Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress

  
Sean Casten  
Member of Congress

  
Nanette Diaz Barragán  
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
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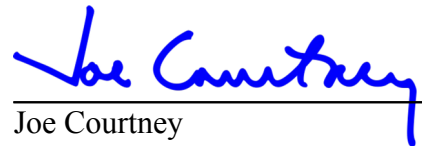
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David N. Cicilline  
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Joe Courtney  
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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
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Cheri Bustos  
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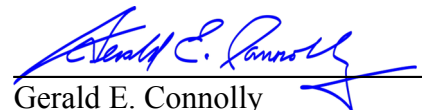
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A. Donald McEachin  
Member of Congress



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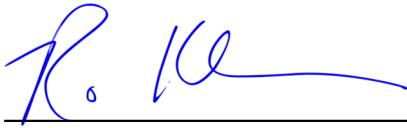
Earl Blumenauer  
Member of Congress



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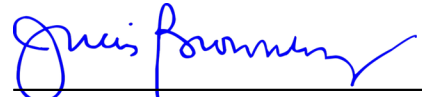
Gerald E. Connolly  
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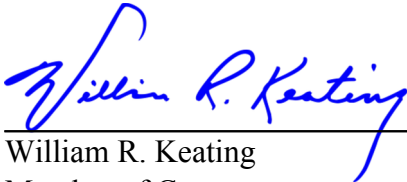
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Ro Khanna  
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Julia Brownley  
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William R. Keating  
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Diana DeGette  
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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
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Conor Lamb  
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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



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Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



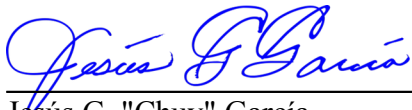
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Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress

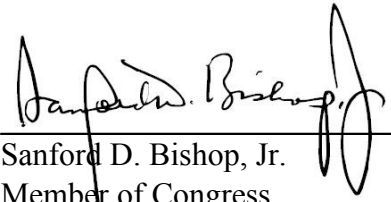


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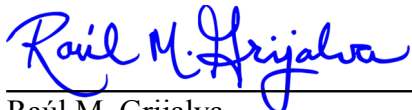
Gregory W. Meeks  
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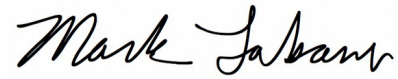
Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
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Raúl M. Grijalva  
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Mark Takano  
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Mikie Sherrill  
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Steve Cohen  
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Jason Crow  
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Elissa Slotkin  
Member of Congress

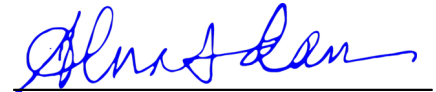


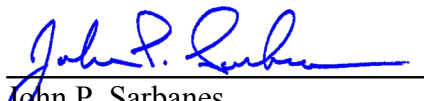
Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress




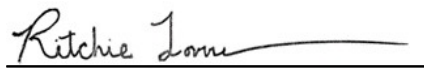
Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress

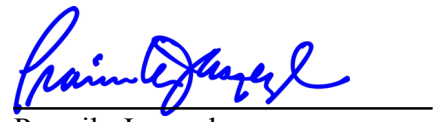
  
Carolyn Bourdeaux  
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress


  
John P. Sarbanes  
Member of Congress


  
Tony Cárdenas  
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Ritchie Torres  
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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress

  
Peter Welch  
Member of Congress

  
Colin Z. Allred  
Member of Congress

  
Madeleine Dean  
Member of Congress

  
Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



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Joseph D. Morelle  
Member of Congress



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Bill Pascrell, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



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Teresa Leger Fernández  
Member of Congress



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Abigail Davis Spanberger  
Member of Congress



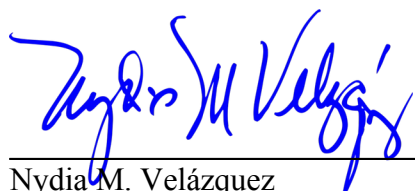
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Elaine G. Luria  
Member of Congress



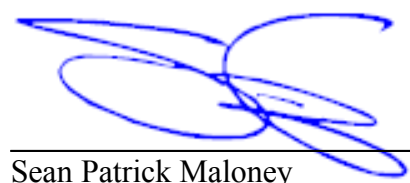
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.  
Member of Congress



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Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



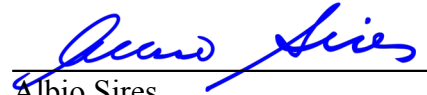
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Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



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Karen Bass  
Member of Congress



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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress



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Ann McLane Kuster  
Member of Congress



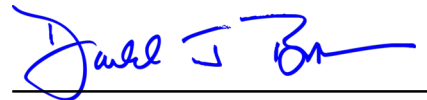
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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Don Bacon  
Member of Congress



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Markwayne Mullin  
Member of Congress



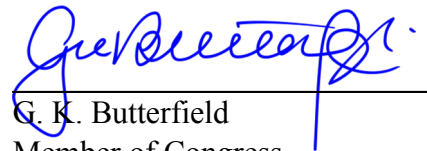
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



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André Carson  
Member of Congress



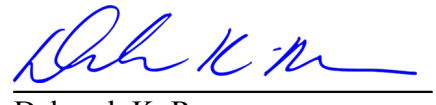
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G. K. Butterfield  
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Peter Meijer M.C.  
Member of Congress




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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress




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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



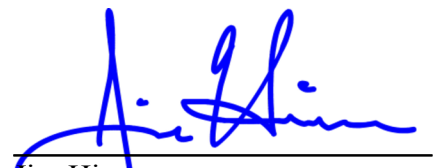
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott  
Member of Congress




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Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



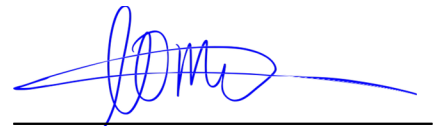
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Ilhan Omar  
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