

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

March 31, 2023

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
US House of Representatives
H-130 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Matt Cartwright
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science and Related Agencies
US House of Representatives
H-130 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Rogers and Ranking Member Cartwright:

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 2024 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 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, from mental and physical health to academics to career planning and preparation.¹ Unfortunately, one in three young people in the United States will grow up without ever having a mentor during their childhood², constituting a “mentoring gap” that demonstrates the need for collaborative investment in mentoring services. In fact, recent research suggests that this gap is growing, with 40 percent of today’s young people saying they have never had a mentor and almost 70 percent saying there were times growing up where they wanted a mentor but could not find an adult to support them in this way.³ Disadvantaged youth in particular are more likely to turn to formal programs to access highly impactful mentors;⁴ 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.⁵

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

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

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

³ Garringer, Michael, & Benning, Chelsea. *Who Mentored You?: A Study Examining the Role Mentors Have Played in the Lives Of Americans Over the Last Half Century*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2023.

⁴ Bruce, Mary, 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.

⁵ Garringer, Michael, McDaniel, Heather, & McQuillin, Sam. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America: Findings from the 2016 Youth Mentoring Survey*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2017. ^[5] 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, 2018.

programs could potentially provide a benefit of three times the public expenditure, for every day in jail that program participants avoid.⁶ Notably, however, programs that serve more children with 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 by nearly \$2,500.⁷ 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, 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. It can also reduce mental health stigma and increase treatment entry and adherence. A recent study by MENTOR found that for youth who said they wanted a mentor while growing up but never had one, 25 percent of them specifically wanted a mentor to help them with a mental health need. That study also found that mentored youth reported stronger mental health when they were growing up and stronger mental health today as adults.⁸
- 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. Youth who meet regularly with their mentor are 46 percent less likely than their peers to start using illegal drugs.
- Mentoring can foster a sense of belonging and forge a sense of personal identity.⁹ Regardless of a young person's specific needs or circumstances, all youth need to know who they are as individuals and that they belong in this world. Too many American youth are growing up without these core aspects of human development, and in their isolation they often drift into antisocial or violent behaviors. Mentoring is a cornerstone of a healthy society that helps all citizens contribute and find their positive path.

⁶ Garringer, Michael, McDaniel, Heather, & McQuillin, Sam. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America: Findings from the 2016 Youth Mentoring Survey*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2017. ^[5] 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, 2018.

⁷ Garringer, Michael, McDaniel, Heather, & McQuillin, Sam. *Examining Youth Mentoring Services Across America: Findings from the 2016 Youth Mentoring Survey*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2017. ^[2] 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.

⁸ Garringer, Michael, & Benning, Chelsea. *Who Mentored You?: A Study Examining the Role Mentors Have Played in the Lives Of Americans Over the Last Half Century*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2023.

⁹ Garringer, Michael, & Benning, Chelsea. *Who Mentored You?: A Study Examining the Role Mentors Have Played in the Lives Of Americans Over the Last Half Century*. MENTOR: The National Mentoring Partnership, 2023.

Despite the clear benefits, the average mentoring program has 63 young people on their waitlist¹⁰ 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.

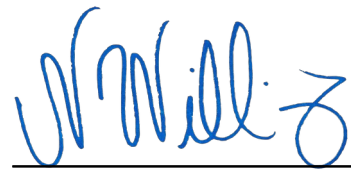
We respectfully request at least \$130 million in funding for the Youth Mentoring Grant program, which will save federal dollars over the long-term by reducing rates of incarceration, bolstering student academic achievement, and enabling positive health and psychosocial outcomes for young people.

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

Sincerely,



Randy Feenstra
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Lucy McBath
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress




Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



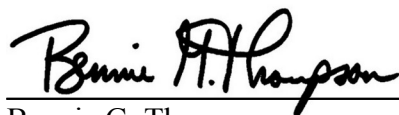
Sharice L. Davids
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Julia Brownley
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Bennie G. Thompson
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Daniel T. Kildee
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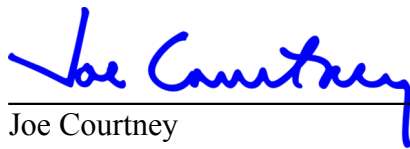


Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress

¹⁰ Ibid.



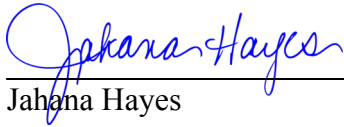
James P. McGovern
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Joe Courtney
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Diana DeGette
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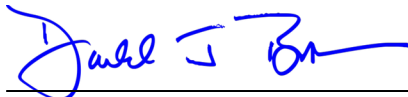
Jahana Hayes
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Josh Gottheimer
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Don Bacon
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Dwight Evans
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Joe Neguse
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Jenniffer González-Colón
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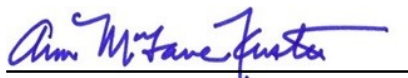
Suzanne Bonamici
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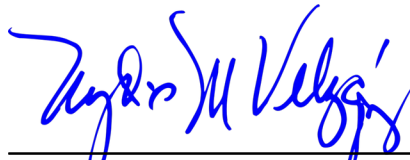
Brian Fitzpatrick
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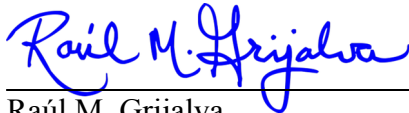
Lori Trahan
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Lizzie Fletcher
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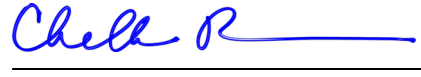
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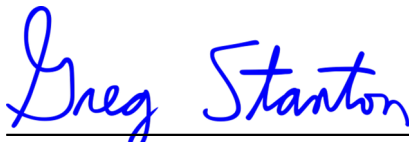
Katie Porter
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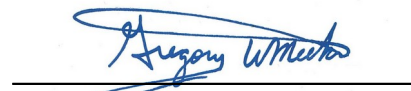
Frederica S. Wilson
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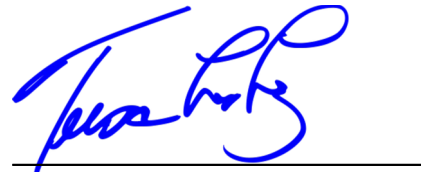
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress
, Committee on Ways and
Means



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



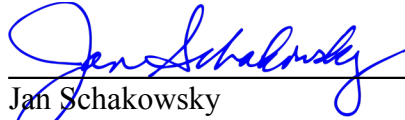
Gregory W. Meeks
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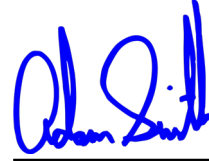
Teresa Leger Fernández
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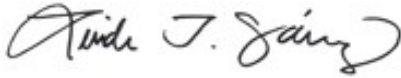
Emanuel Cleaver, II
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Jan Schakowsky
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Adam Smith
Member of Congress



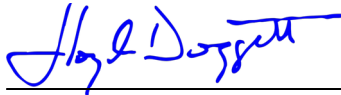
Linda T. Sánchez
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Ilhan Omar
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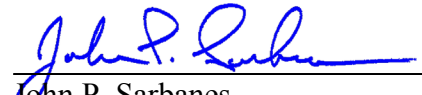
Ritchie Torres
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Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



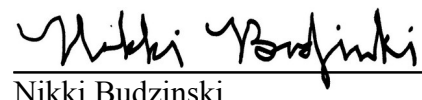
Ruben Gallego
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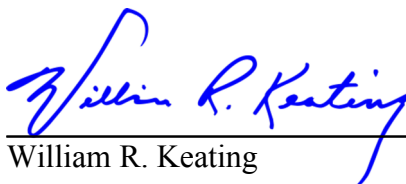
Sara Jacobs
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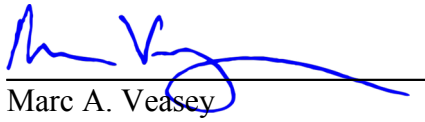
William R. Keating
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Morgan McGarvey
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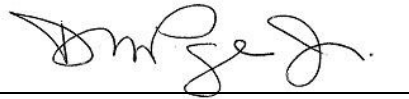
Rashida Tlaib
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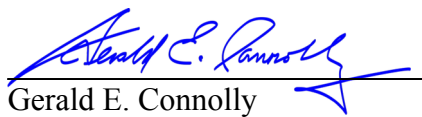
Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



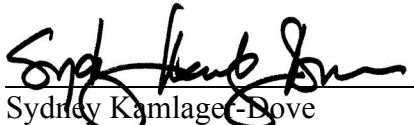
Robin L. Kelly
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



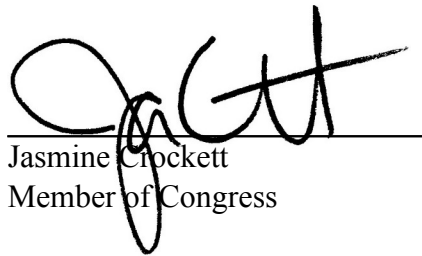
Gerald E. Connolly
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Sydney Kamlage-Dove
Member of Congress



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Jasmine Crockett
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Jason Crow
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Jimmy Panetta
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Donald G. Davis
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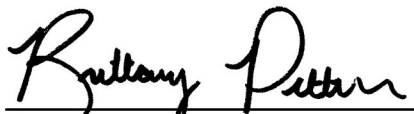
Sylvia R. Garcia
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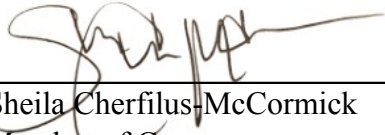
Earl Blumenauer
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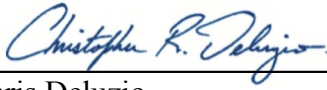
Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
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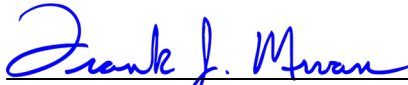
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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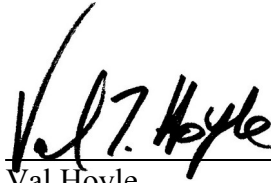
Chris Deluzio
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Elissa Slotkin
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Frank J. Mrvan
Member of Congress



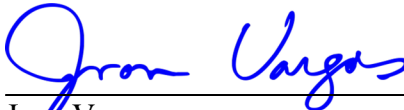
Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



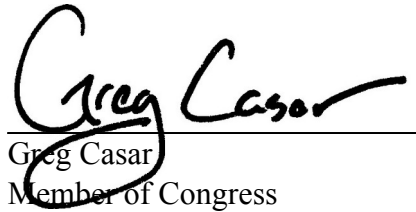
Marcus J. Molinaro
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Zach Nunn
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Juan Vargas
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Greg Casar
Member of Congress



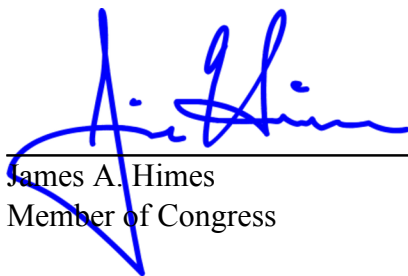
Troy Carter
Member of Congress



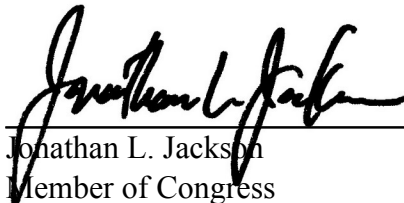
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



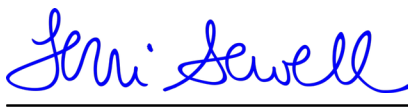
James A. Himes
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Jonathan L. Jackson
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Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



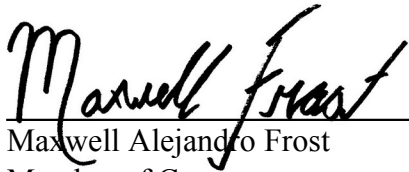
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



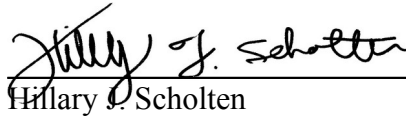
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



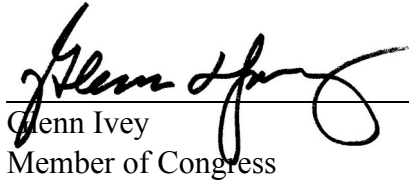
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
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Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



Glenn Ivey
Member of Congress



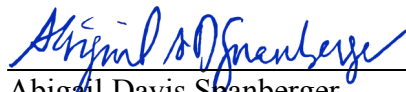
Sean Casten
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Sheila Jackson Lee
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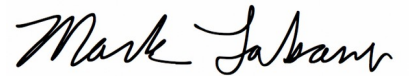
Jared Moskowitz
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Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



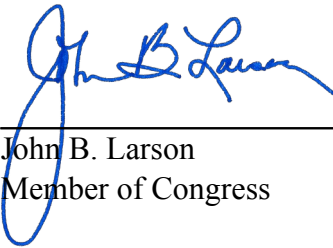
Seth Magaziner
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MARK TAKANO
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David Scott
Member of Congress



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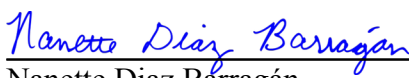
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



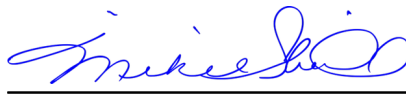
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



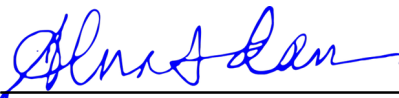
Madeleine Dean
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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Mikie Sherrill
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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
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Bill Pascrell Jr

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
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Rick Larsen

Rick Larsen
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Marilyn Strickland

Marilyn Strickland
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André Carson

André Carson
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Debbie Dingell
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Robert C. "Bobby" Scott

Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
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Dina Titus

Dina Titus
Member of Congress