April 26, 2012

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker of the House
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Minority Leader Pelosi,

We write to ask for your continued support of the Special Diabetes Program as we work in a bipartisan manner on its reauthorization. The Special Diabetes program is demonstrating real returns on the federal investment it has received and is creating a brighter future for Americans burdened by diabetes.

Diabetes costs this country over $174 billion annually and these costs are expected to nearly triple in the next 25 years. Fortunately, the Special Diabetes Program is yielding research advances that are helping to better treat and prevent this disease, bringing us closer to a cure for type 1 diabetes, and hopefully bringing diabetes-related costs under control.

The Special Diabetes Program consists of two parts – the Special Diabetes Program for Type 1 Diabetes (SDP) and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI). Several notable advances resulting from the SDP include:

- Artificial pancreas technologies, which would help people to better manage their blood sugar levels and avoid costly and burdensome complications. These technologies have been tested and are many steps closer to one day being on the market.
- The discovery that 6.5 years of intensive blood glucose control can cut in half the onset of impaired kidney function in T1D patients. This finding will enable steps to be taken well in advance to avoid this most costly complication to the Medicare program. Diabetes is the leading cause of end-stage renal disease (ESRD), which cost $39.5 billion in public and private spending in 2008.
- Treatment combining a drug and laser therapy that is almost twice as likely to improve vision in people who have diabetic eye disease versus laser therapy alone (50% vs. 28%). Improved vision was defined as being able to read two lines further on the eye chart. The difference is life changing for those who suffer from diabetic eye disease, permitting individuals to continue to work or drive, for instance.
- Immune therapy drugs that have been used to halt the progression of type 1 diabetes onset for up to a year in those genetically at risk of developing the disease. When patients then developed full type 1 onset, they were often able to

take less insulin and have better blood glucose levels than those who did not participate in the trials. Researchers hope to build upon this success to halt the onset of the disease altogether.

The program is also making a tremendous difference in the health of American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN), who are burdened disproportionately with type 2 diabetes at a rate of 2.8 times the national average. In these communities, SDPI funding has increased significantly the availability of diabetes prevention and treatment services for those with diabetes. These increased services have translated into remarkable improvements in diabetes care including:

- The average blood sugar level decreased from 9.0% in 1996 to 8.0% in 2011 as measured by the A1C test. Every percentage point drop in A1C results can reduce risk of eye, kidney, and nerve complications by 40%.
- Average LDL cholesterol declined from 118 mg/dL in 1998 to 94 mg/dL in 2011. Improved control of LDL cholesterol can reduce cardiovascular complications by 20%-50%.
- Between 1995 and 2006, the incident rate of ESRD in AI/AN people with diabetes fell by 27.7% -- a greater decline than any other racial or ethnic group. Given that Medicare costs per year for one patient on hemodialysis were $82,285 in 2009, this reduction in new cases of ESRD means a decrease in the number of patients requiring dialysis, translating into millions of dollars in cost savings for Medicare, the Indian Health Service, and other third party payers.

These are only a few of the many advances that are the result of the Special Diabetes Program. The research breakthroughs made possible by the SDP are already improving diabetes care for the 26 million Americans combating the disease in ways that will reduce long-term health expenditures for costly diabetes complications. We are pleased that this program has received such overwhelming bipartisan support in the past and we look forward to working with you in the future to ensure the Special Diabetes Program can enable us to capitalize on the advances to date and the opportunities that lie ahead.

Sincerely,

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

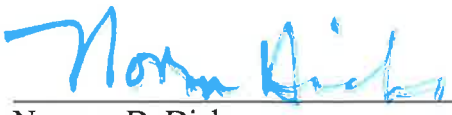
Ed Whitfield
Member of Congress

Tom Reed
Member of Congress

Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress

Gene Green
Member of Congress

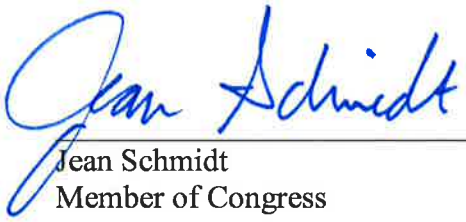
Louise McIntosh Slaughter
Member of Congress



Norman D. Dicks
Member of Congress

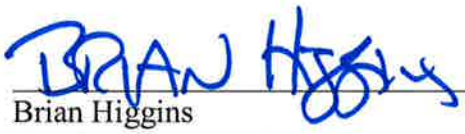
Ed Pastor
Member of Congress

Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress



Jean Schmidt
Member of Congress

Thomas E. Petri
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress

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Todd Russell Platts
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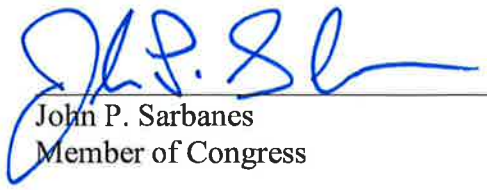
C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress

Dan Boren
Member of Congress

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Shelley Moore Capito
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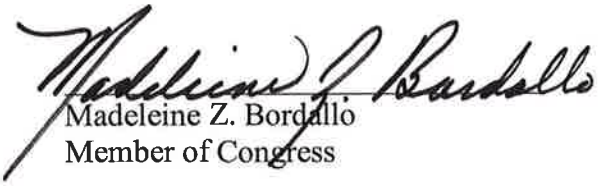
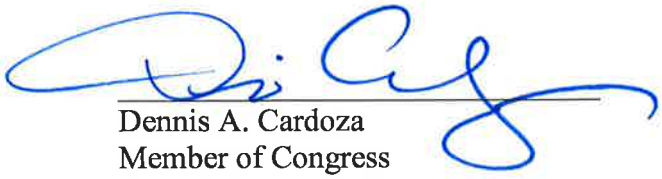
Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress



Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress

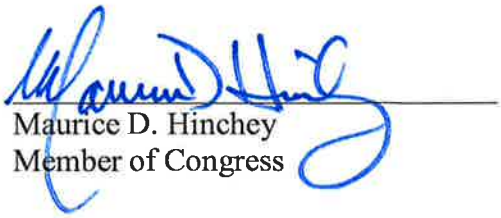
J. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress



Dennis A. Cardoza
Member of Congress

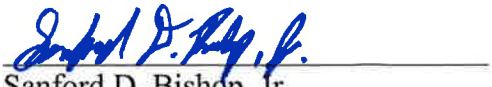
Mike Ross
Member of Congress

Stevan Pearce
Member of Congress



Maurice D. Hinchey
Member of Congress

K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress

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Eni F. H. Faleomavaega
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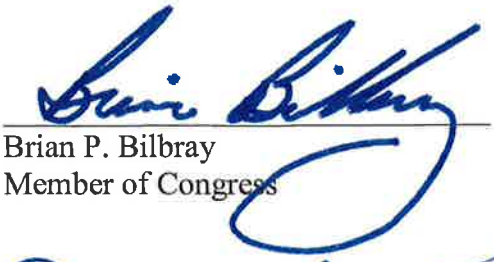

Brian P. Bilbray
Member of Congress

Lamar Smith
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Jerry F. Costello
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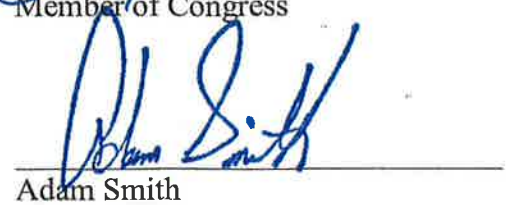

Adam Smith
Member of Congress

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Member of Congress

Steven C. LaTourette
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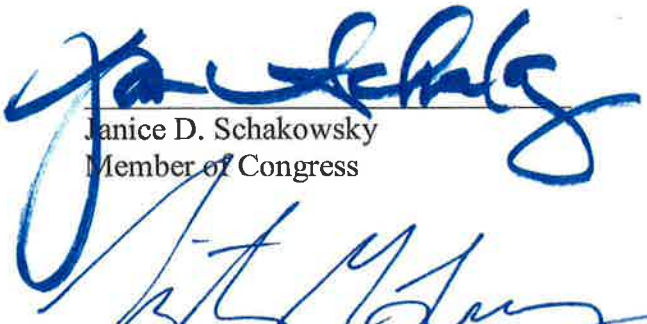

Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress

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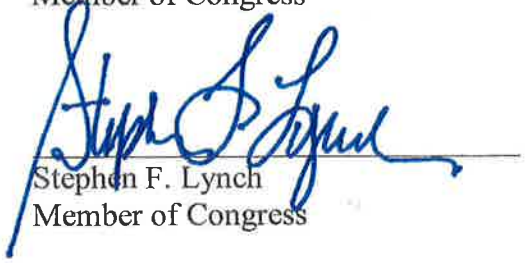

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

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Nydia M. Velázquez
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Barbara Lee
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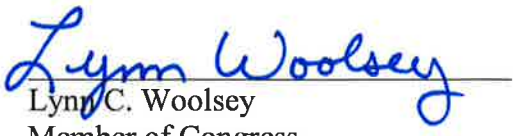
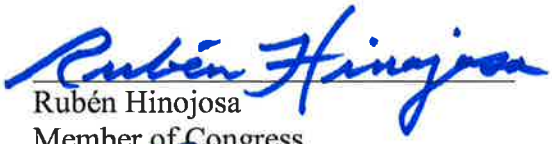
Member of Congress

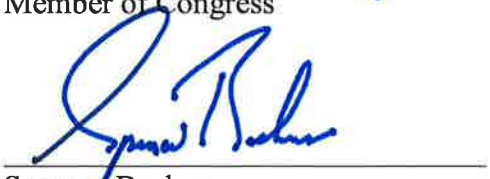


Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress



Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress

Barney Frank
Member of Congress



Spencer Bachus
Member of Congress

Thaddeus G. McCotter
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
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Michael C. Burgess
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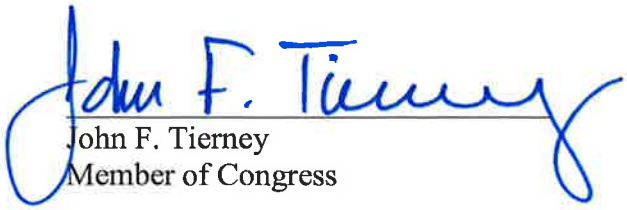
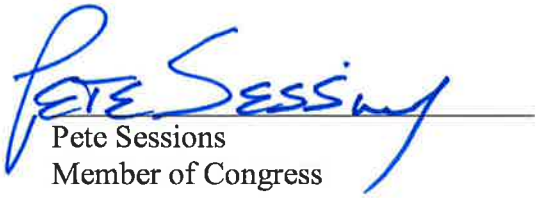
James P. Moran
Member of Congress



John F. Tierney
Member of Congress

Jo Bonner
Member of Congress

Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress

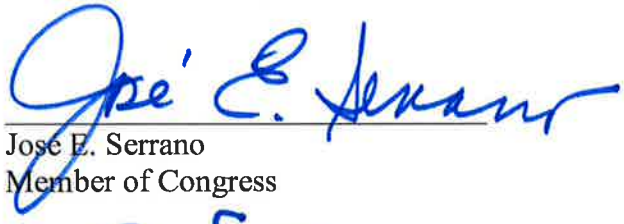


Pete Sessions
Member of Congress

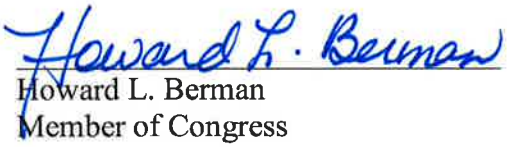
Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

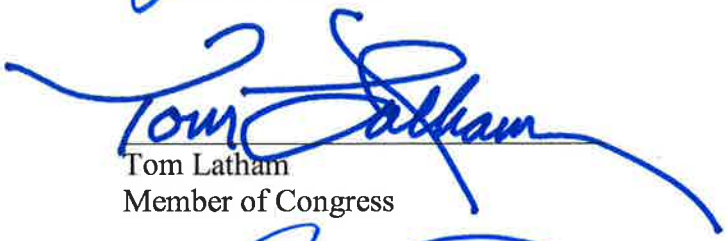
Joe Wilson
Member of Congress



Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress

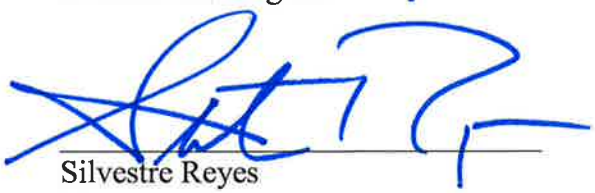


Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress



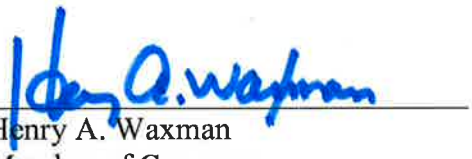
Tom Latham
Member of Congress

Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress

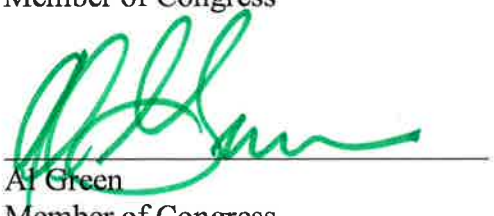


Silvestre Reyes
Member of Congress

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress

Howard Coble
Member of Congress

Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress

David E. Price
Member of Congress

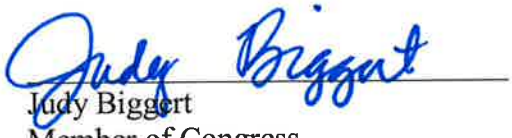
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress

Mike McIntyre
Member of Congress

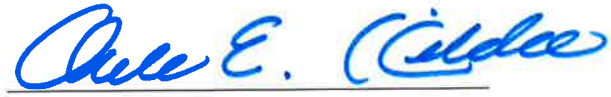


Judy Biggert
Member of Congress

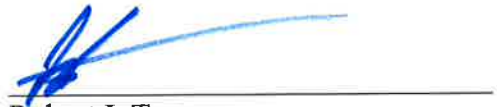
Gary L. Ackerman
Member of Congress

Blake Farenthold
Member of Congress

Edward J. Markey
Member of Congress



Dale E. Kildee
Member of Congress

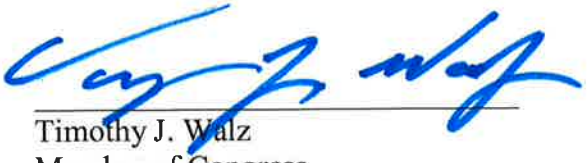


Robert L.Turner
Member of Congress

David G. Reichert
Member of Congress

Bruce L. Braley
Member of Congress

Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress



Timothy J. Walz
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski
Member of Congress

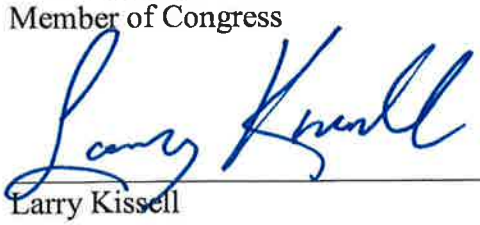
Michael G. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress

Betty McCollum
Member of Congress

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress

Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



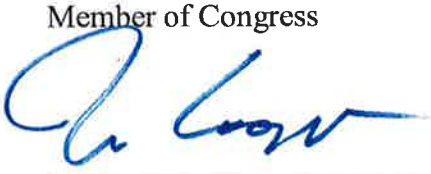
Larry Kissell
Member of Congress

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

Gary C. Peters
Member of Congress

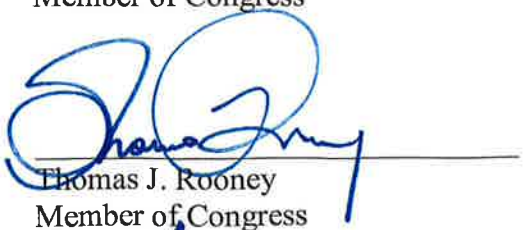
Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Billy Long
Member of Congress

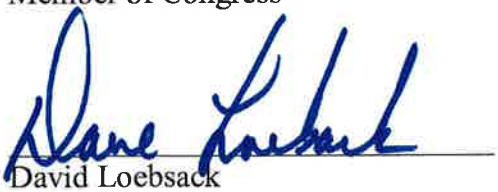


Jim Cooper
Member of Congress

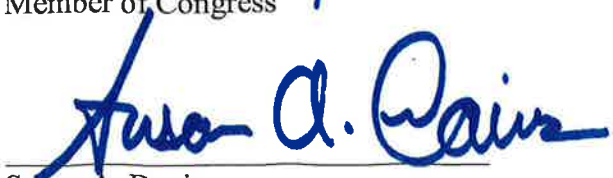
Bill Cassidy
Member of Congress



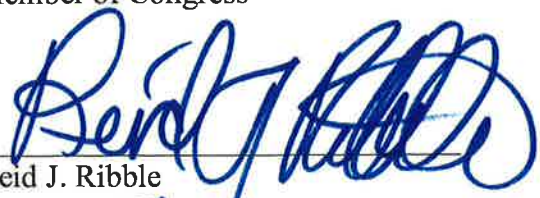
Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress



David Loebsack
Member of Congress



Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



Reid J. Ribble
Member of Congress

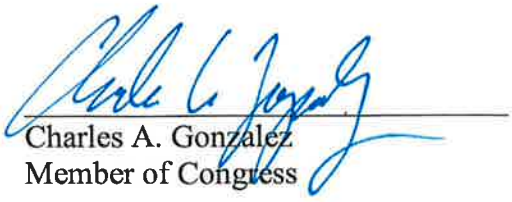
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

Donna M. Christensen
Member of Congress

Bill Flores
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Nan A. S. Hayworth
Member of Congress



Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Alan Nunnelee
Member of Congress

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

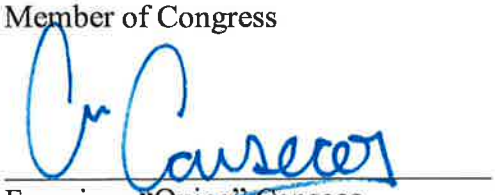
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress

Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Mazie K. Hirono
Member of Congress

Ron Kind
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

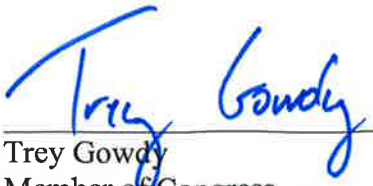


Francisco "Quico" Canseco
Member of Congress

Laura Richardson
Member of Congress

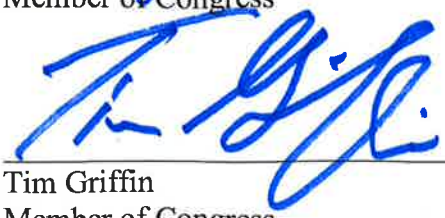
Hansen Clarke
Member of Congress

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Trey Gowdy
Member of Congress

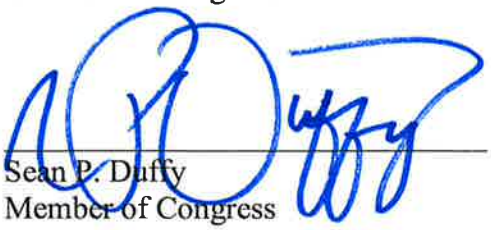
Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



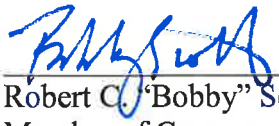
Tim Griffin
Member of Congress

Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress

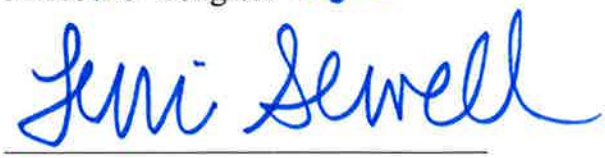
Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Sean P. Duffy
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



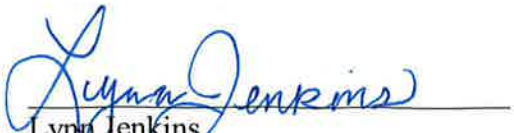
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Jaime Herrera Beutler
Member of Congress

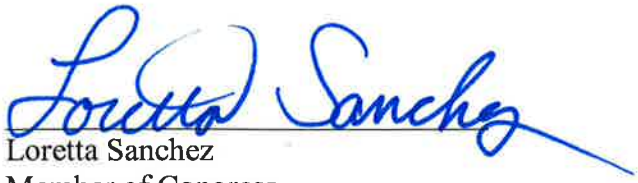
Brad Miller
Member of Congress

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



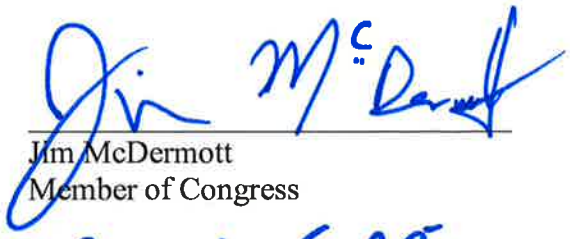
Lynn Jenkins
Member of Congress



Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

John W. Olver
Member of Congress

Kenny Marchant
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress

Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress

Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress

Devin Nunes
Member of Congress

Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress

Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Dan Benishek
Member of Congress

Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress

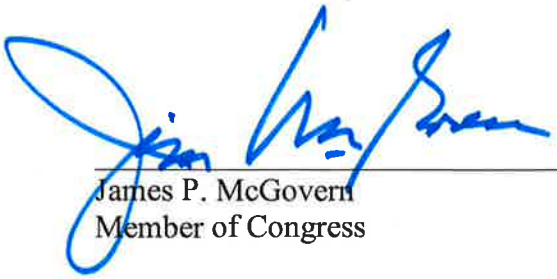
Robert T. Schilling
Member of Congress

Christopher P. Gibson
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Phil Gingrey
Member of Congress

Ander Crenshaw
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress

Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress

William L. Owens
Member of Congress

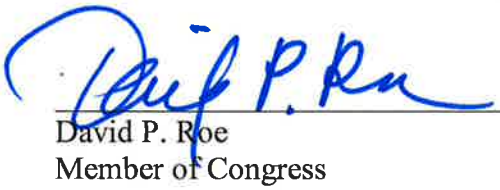
Ted Poe
Member of Congress

Leonard Lance
Member of Congress

André Carson
Member of Congress

Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress

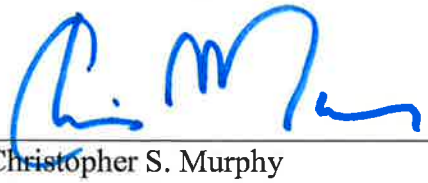
Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



David P. Roe
Member of Congress

David Rivera
Member of Congress

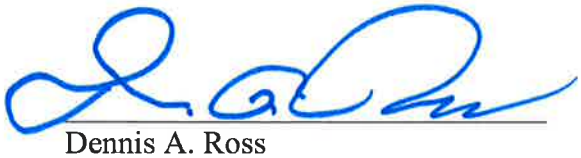
Martha Roby
Member of Congress



Christopher S. Murphy
Member of Congress

Tom Marino
Member of Congress

Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



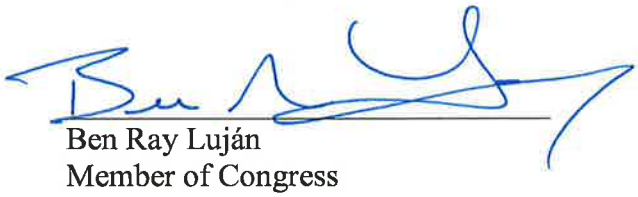
Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress

Michael F. Doyle
Member of Congress

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Peter T. King
Member of Congress

Jason Altmire
Member of Congress

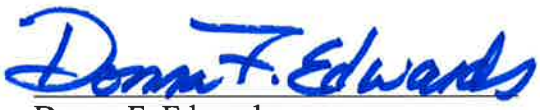


Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress

Mike Rogers (AL)
Member of Congress

Rick Berg
Member of Congress

Tim Murphy
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
Member of Congress

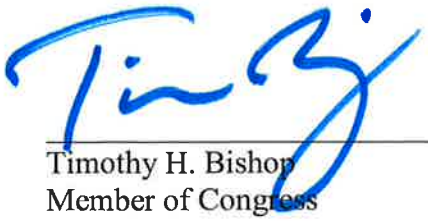
Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress

David B. McKinley
Member of Congress

Pete Olson
Member of Congress

Brett Guthrie
Member of Congress

Gregg Harper
Member of Congress



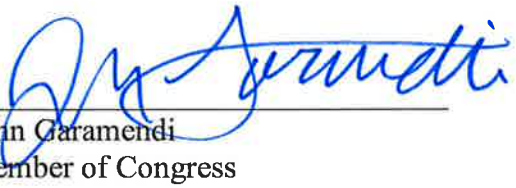
Timothy H. Bishop
Member of Congress

Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Colleen W. Hanabusa
Member of Congress

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

Sue Wilkins Myrick
Member of Congress

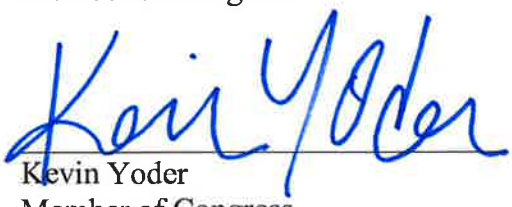


John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Kristi L. Noem
Member of Congress

Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress

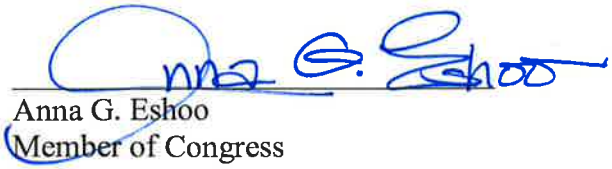
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Kevin Yoder
Member of Congress

Robert J. Dold
Member of Congress

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

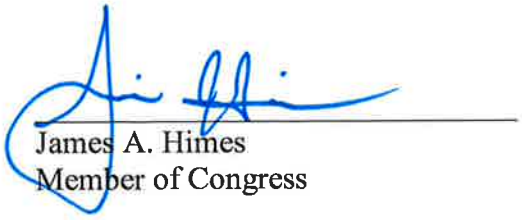
Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Mark Amodei
Member of Congress

Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress

Bill Posey
Member of Congress



James A. Himes
Member of Congress

Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

Cynthia M. Lummis
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress

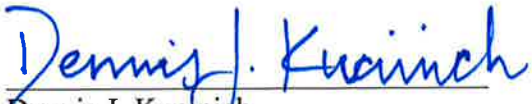
Patrick J. Tiberi
Member of Congress

Mary Bono Mack
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress

Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

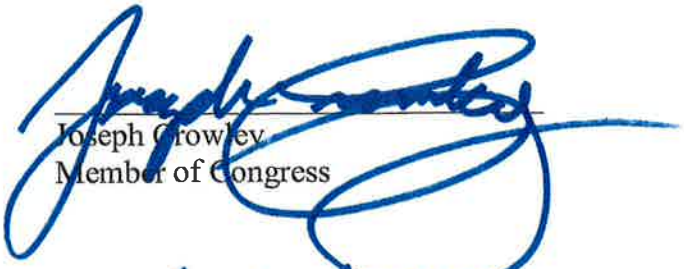
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress

Jim Matheson
Member of Congress

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress

G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

Melvin L. Watt
Member of Congress

Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress

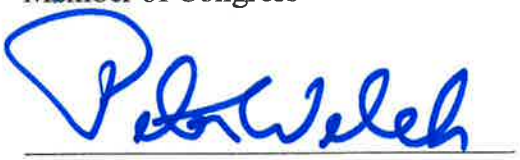
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

Mo Brooks
Member of Congress

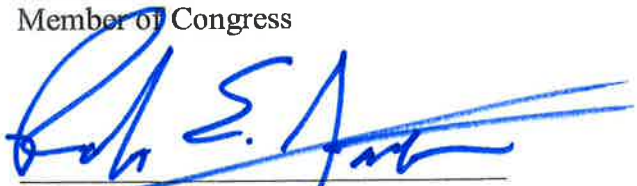
Joe Donnelly
Member of Congress

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

Ben Chandler
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Robert E. Latta
Member of Congress

Jon Runyan
Member of Congress

Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress

Steve King
Member of Congress

John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress

John Sullivan
Member of Congress

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress

Steven M. Palazzo
Member of Congress

David Scott
Member of Congress

Patrick T. McHenry
Member of Congress

Vern Buchanan
Member of Congress

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress