

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

October 21, 2005

The Honorable Jerry Lewis  
Chairman  
Appropriations Committee  
H-218

The Honorable David Obey  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Committee  
1016 LHOB

Dear Chairman Lewis and Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to seek your support to include Section 8117 of the Senate passed version of H.R. 2863, which would eliminate any pay gap experienced by a member of the Reserve component who is employed by the federal government, when you and your Senate colleagues' conference to consider H.R. 2863, the Department of Defense Appropriations Act.

As you are aware, a recently published Department of Defense Survey indicates that over half of the men and women in the Guard and Reserves lose income as a result of their activation. According to the most recent figures, that would mean of the 142,614 citizen soldiers serving our country over 9,000 of them are Federal employees who are suffering financially as a result of their service.

We are aware that there is opposition to this commonsense bi-partisan measure and wanted to share with you why we believe these concerns are misguided.

The first argument is the cost of the program. It is our understanding the Congressional Budget Office's estimate for this program is \$116 million for five years, which is a miniscule amount compared to the cost of recruiting and training the experienced soldiers we lose because of the pay gap.

The second argument is that requiring the federal government to provide pay differential to citizen soldiers, has a chilling effect on the hiring of individuals in the Guard and Reserve by the federal government. As you are aware, it is an egregious and prosecutable federal offense to refrain from hiring an applicant based on their military membership, and we should not endanger the financial security of our brave citizen soldiers because of an argument that lacks legal basis.

The third argument those opposed to eliminating the pay gap offer is that, by compensating those citizen soldiers who lose money as a result of their service, we would be paying them more for the same work as an active duty soldier of same rank and this would cause tension amongst the active duty and reserve component soldiers.

The philosophical objection that such measures create a disparity in the ranks is inaccurate. In fact, they correct a disparity. The families of active duty troops on deployment are economically enhanced. The families of *some* deployed reservists are economically disadvantaged – a fair percentage of them severely. Reservists make their financial commitments based upon their normal civilian salary. When military pay falls short, they experience a problem that active duty troops do not.

Additionally, we are troubled by the logic of opponents to eliminating the pay gap who are encouraging private sector companies to make up pay differential while arguing that federal employees should not receive the same benefit.

In a recent address to military families at the Idaho Center in Nampa, Idaho, President George W. Bush expressed support for those employers who have gone above and beyond what is required by law in the support provided to their activated citizen soldier employees. As you are aware, the Employer Support for Guard and Reserve (ESGR), a division of Secretary Rumsfeld's office, has done an extraordinary job encouraging our nation's employers to go above and beyond the minimum requirements of the law through the continuation of pay, benefits or both to their activated citizen soldier employees.

What is good for the goose should be good for the gander, and we hope you agree with us that the federal government, the largest single employer of the citizens who make up the Guard and Reserve, should be able to do for its employees what ESGR has advocated private employers to do. Including the Senate language in the conference report will be an important first step to alleviate this burden suffered by our brave citizen soldiers.

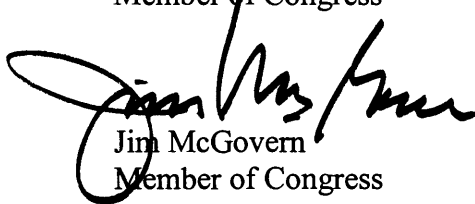
Sincerely,



Tom Lantos  
Member of Congress



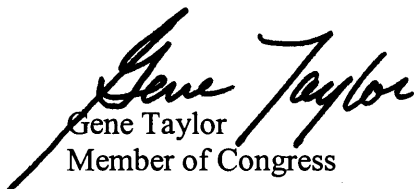
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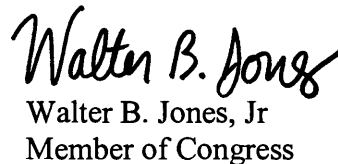
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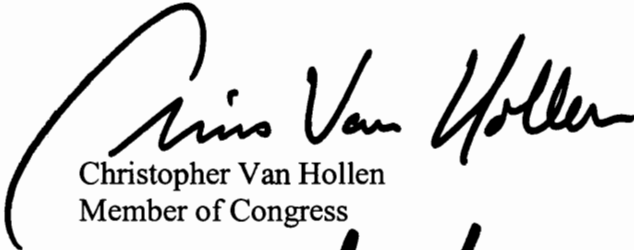
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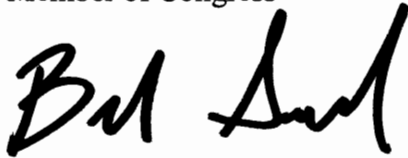
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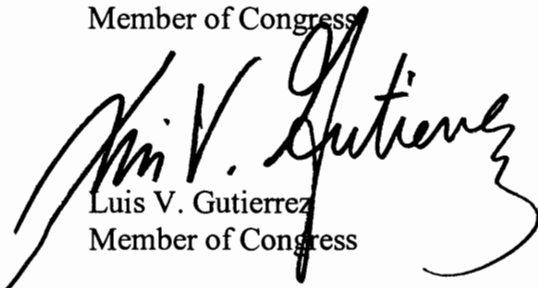
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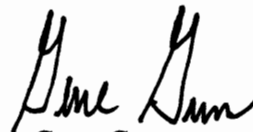
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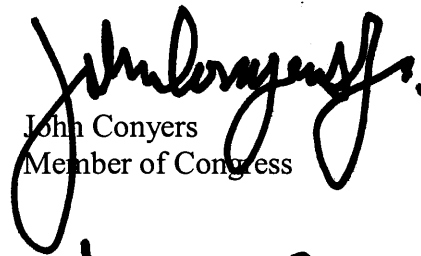


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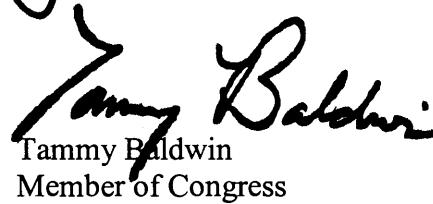


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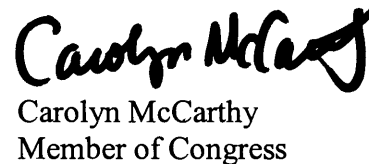
  
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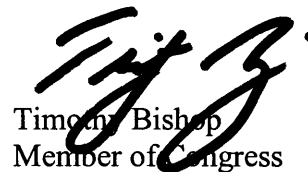
  
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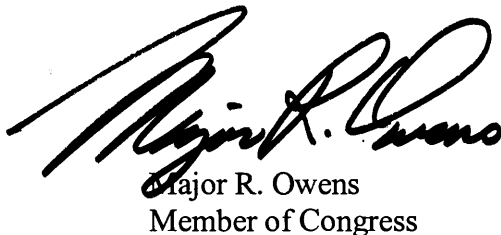
  
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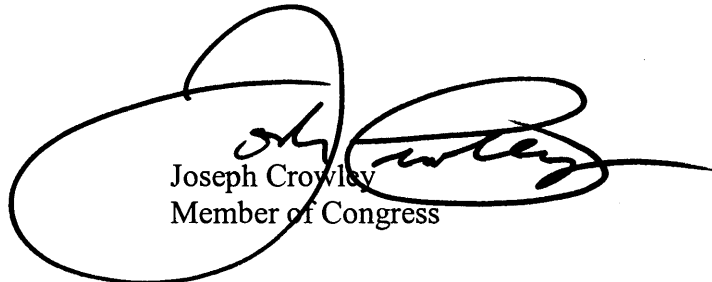
  
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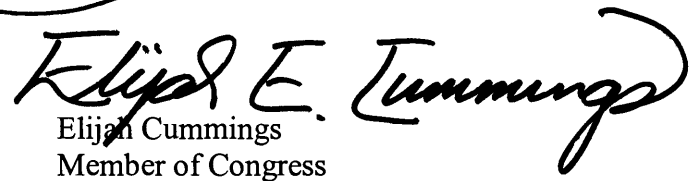
  
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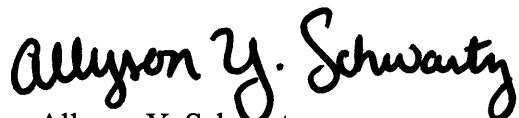
  
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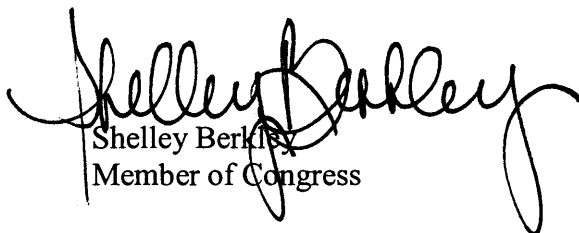
  
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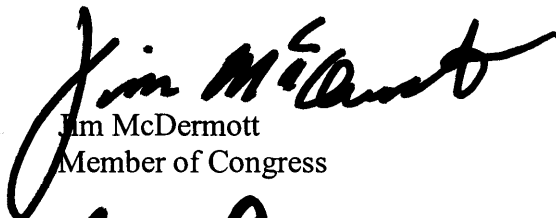
  
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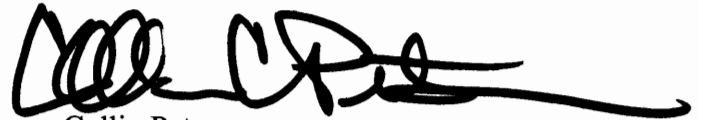
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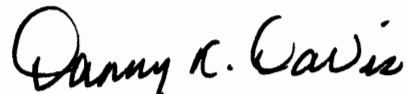
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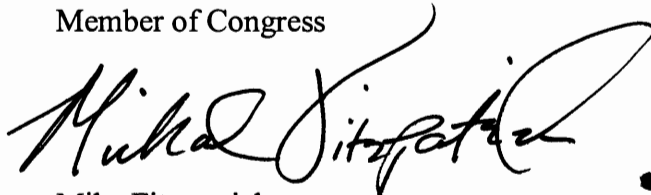



  
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