

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

July 26, 2010

The Honorable Norman D. Dicks  
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense  
House Committee on Appropriations  
H-149 The Capitol  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable C. W. Bill Young  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Defense  
House Committee on Appropriations  
1016 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Dicks and Ranking Member Young:

We write to urge you to include as part of your Fiscal Year 2011 budget request for the U.S. Department of Defense at least \$700 million for mental health programs, specifically to increase access to licensed mental health professionals for all our returning service members.

The extraordinary commitment of President Obama and this Congress to the mental health and well-being of our brave service men and women is much appreciated and dually recognized by members of the Armed Services. We applaud the \$492 million amount allocated in FY 2010 by Congress for veterans' mental health (an amount that was \$120 million more than Secretary Gates' original request), but much more needs to be done.

Sadly, despite these efforts, Army suicide data reveals a horrific trend of an increasing rate of suicides since 2004. In 2009, 349 men and women on active duty and reservists took their own lives, more people than we lost in actual combat this year in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. For this reason we ask that as you prepare the FY 2011 budget for the Department of Defense, please consider these facts and increase funding for traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and psychological health.

Every soldier discharged from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan needs to have a one-to-one in person screening with a licensed mental health professional. The military has a dangerous shortage of mental health professionals. We must increase funding by at least \$700 million in FY 2011 to permanently move away from years of "pilot programs" and finally implement a comprehensive post-deployment screening program for all service members by trained mental health professionals. Once mental health care is made more accessible, the stigma behind seeking help for mental injuries will also dissipate.

Once again, we firmly support the efforts to reduce military suicides. Without this urgent and necessary increase in funding, our young American heroes will continue to take their own lives at an alarming and unnecessary rate. Now is the time to end to this disturbing trend.

We appreciate your attention to this matter and welcome the opportunity to work with you to support these initiatives in FY 2011 and for years to come.



MICHAEL E. McMAHON  
Member of Congress

Sincerely,



THOMAS J. ROONEY  
Member of Congress

*Harry Teague*

Harry Teague  
Member of Congress

*Bob Filner*

Bob Filner  
Member of Congress

*Tammy Baldwin*

Tammy Baldwin  
Member of Congress

*Yvette D. Clarke*

Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress

*Henry Cuellar*

Henry Cuellar  
Member of Congress

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Al Green  
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*Mazie Hirono*

Mazie K. Hirono  
Member of Congress

*Sheila Jackson-Lee*

Sheila Jackson-Lee  
Member of Congress

*Ron Kind*

Ron Kind  
Member of Congress

*Ron Klein*

Ron Klein  
Member of Congress

*David P. Roe*

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Member of Congress

*Joe Baca*

Joe Baca  
Member of Congress

*John A. Boccieri*

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Member of Congress

*Gerald E. Connolly*

Gerald E. Connolly  
Member of Congress

*Charles A. Gonzalez*

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*John J. Hall*

John J. Hall  
Member of Congress

*Rush Holt*

Rush D. Holt  
Member of Congress

*Dale E. Kildee*

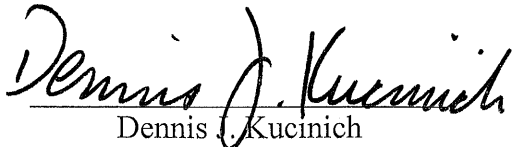
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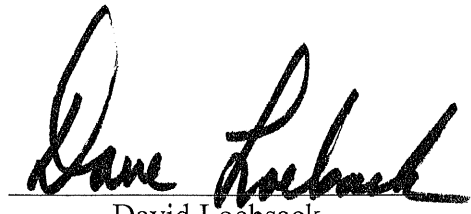
*Ann Kirkpatrick*

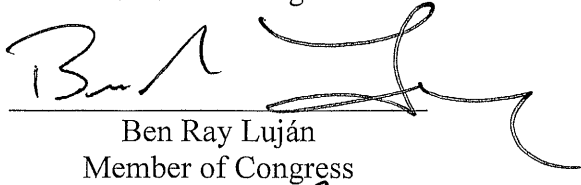
Ann Kirkpatrick  
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*Frank Kratovil Jr.*

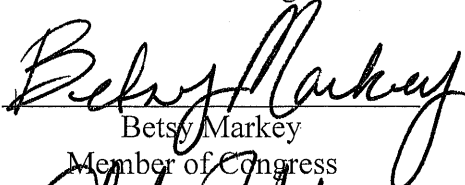
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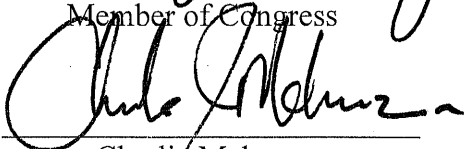
  
David Loebsack  
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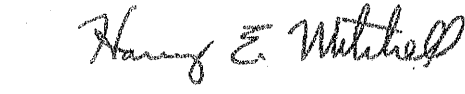
  
Daniel B. Maffei  
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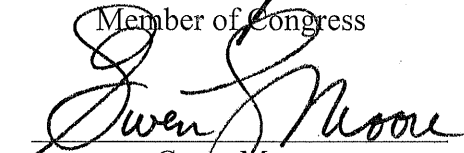
  
Betsy Markey  
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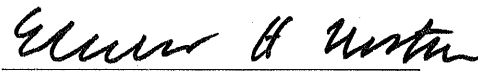
  
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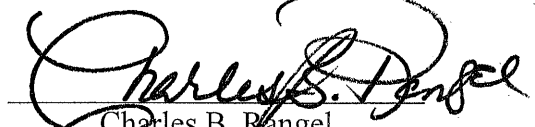
  
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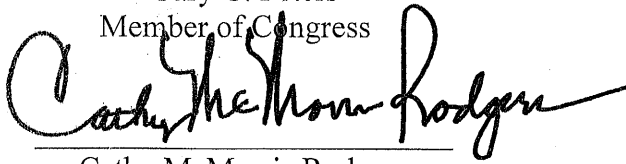
  
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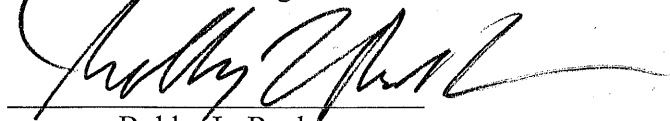
  
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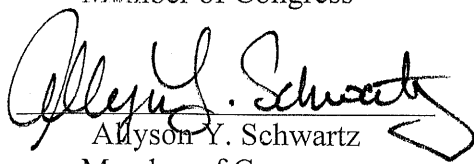
  
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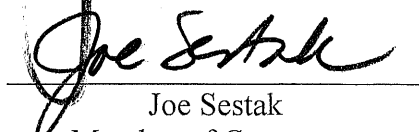
  
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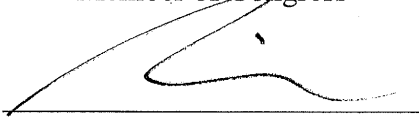
  
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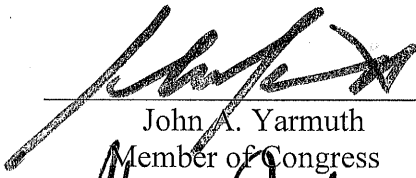
Carol Shea-Porter  
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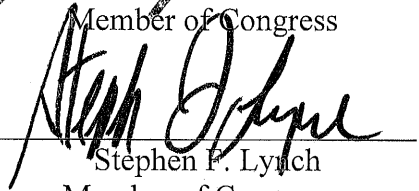
Edolphus Towns  
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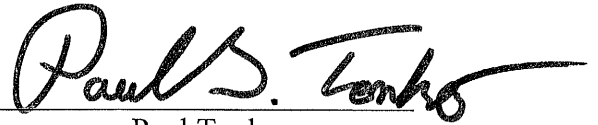
Anthony D. Weiner  
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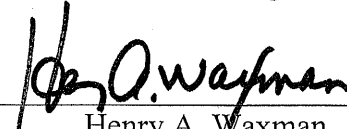
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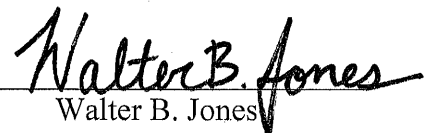
Paul Tonko  
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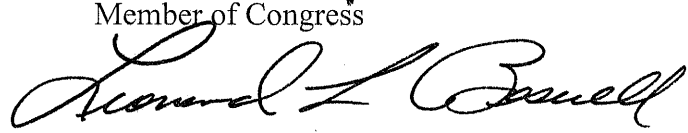
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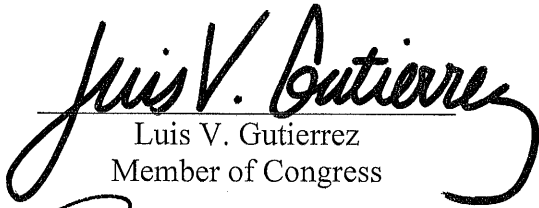
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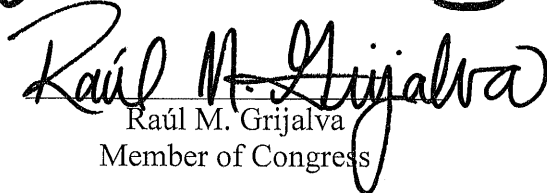


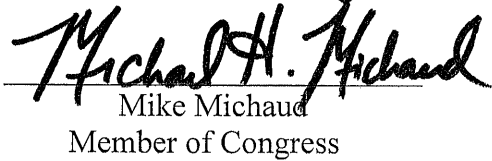
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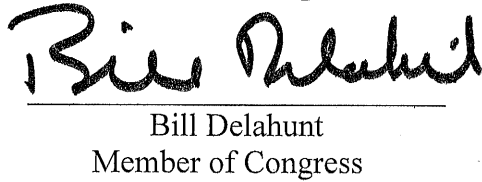


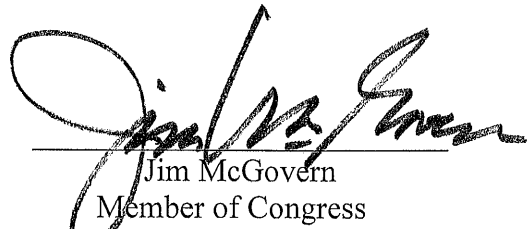
Leonard Boswell  
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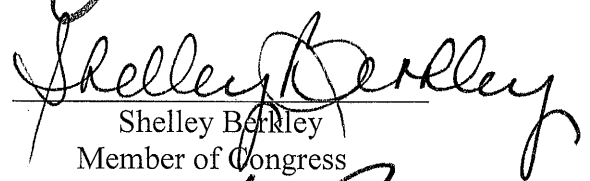
  
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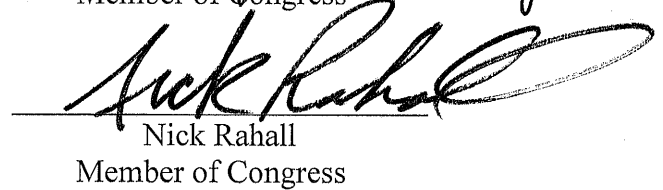
  
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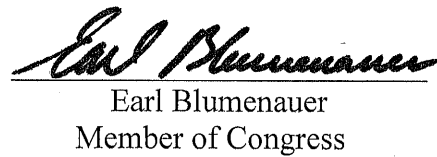
  
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