

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,



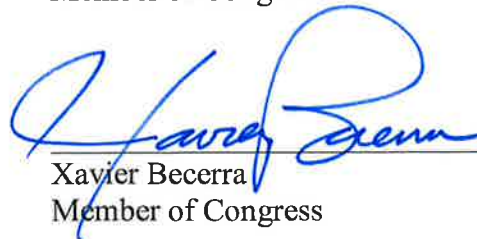
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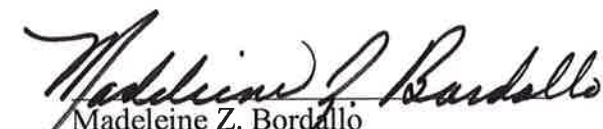
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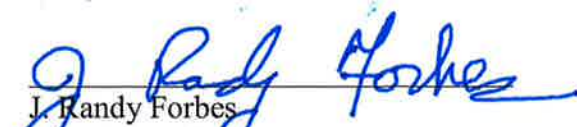
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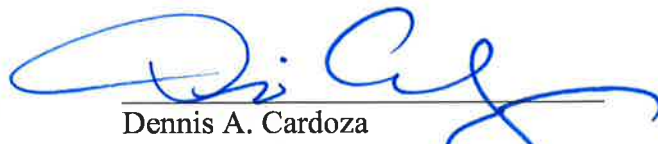
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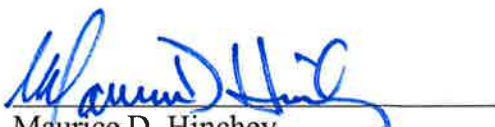
  
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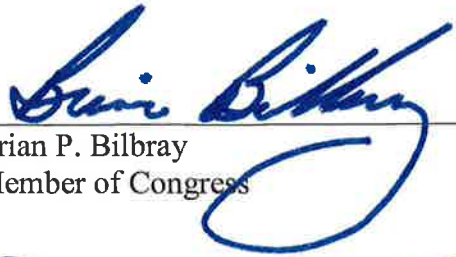
  
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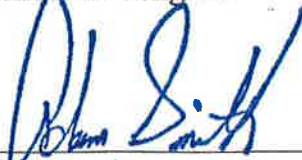
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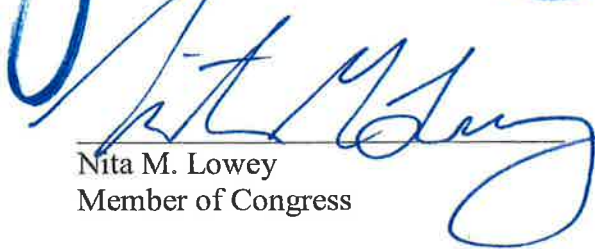
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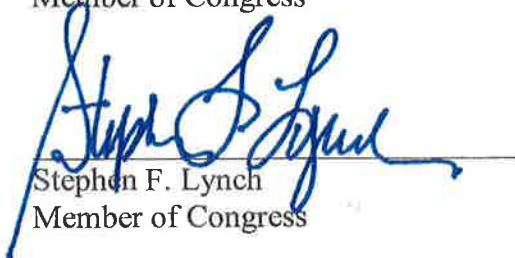
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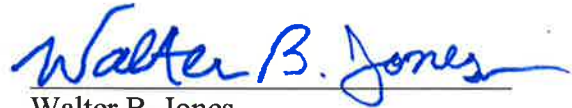
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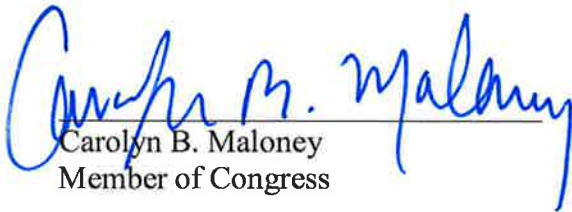
Corrine Brown  
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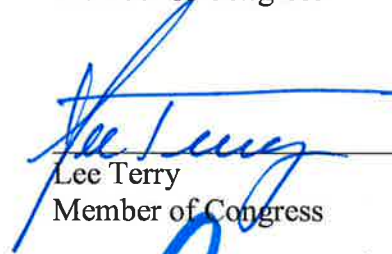
Jerrold Nadler  
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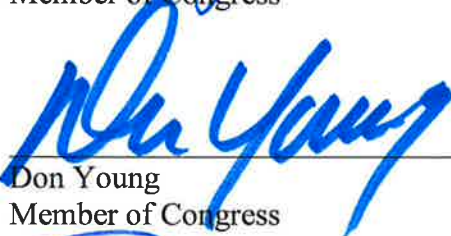
Carolyn B. Maloney  
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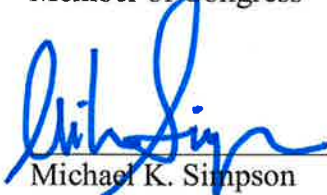
Lee Terry  
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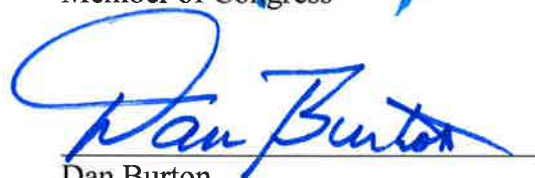
Lucille Roybal-Allard  
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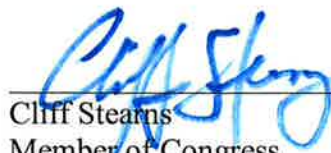
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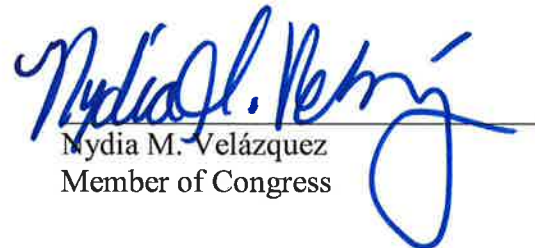
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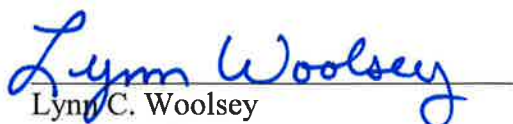
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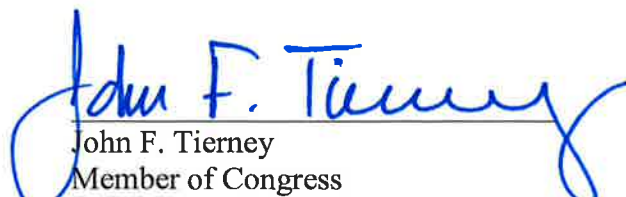
  
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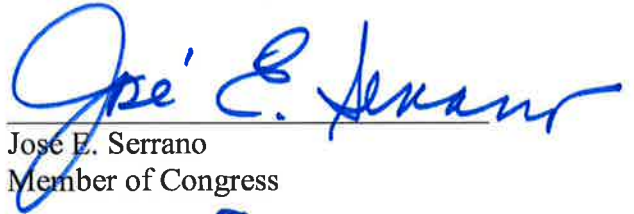
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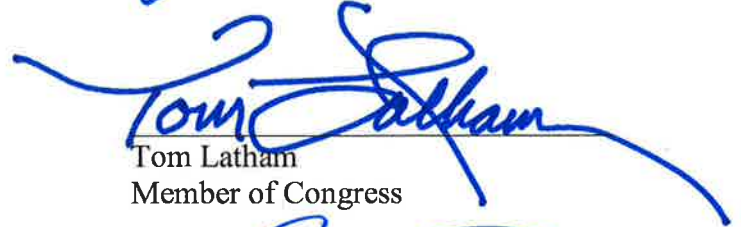
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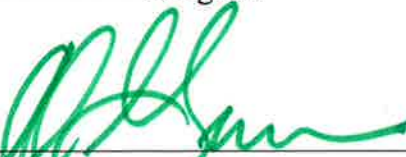
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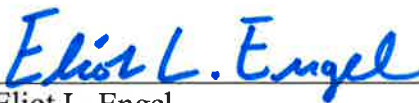
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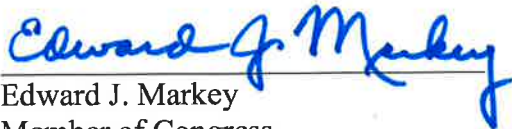
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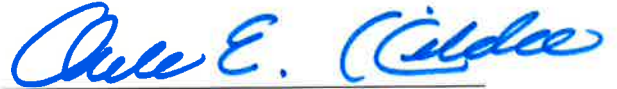
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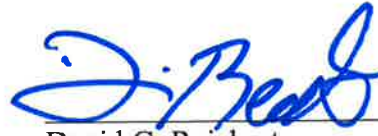
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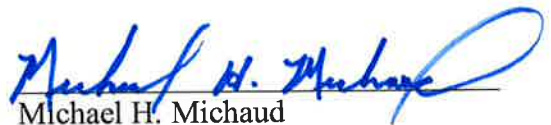
Robert L. Turner  
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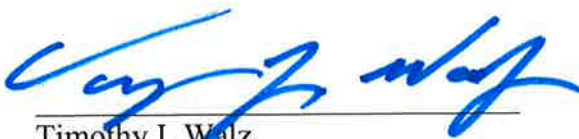
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Russ Carnahan  
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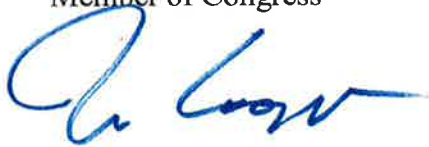
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Niki Tsongas  
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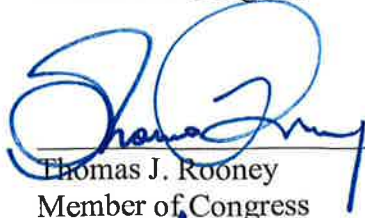
Billy Long  
Member of Congress



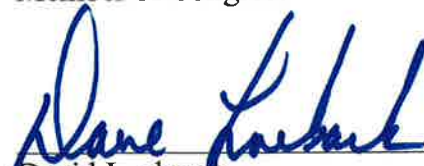
Jim Cooper  
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Bill Cassidy  
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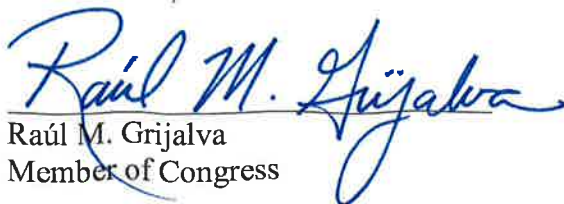
David Loeb sack  
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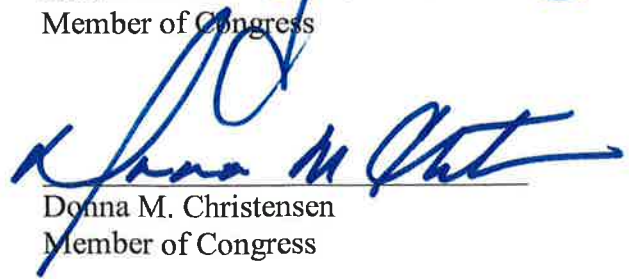
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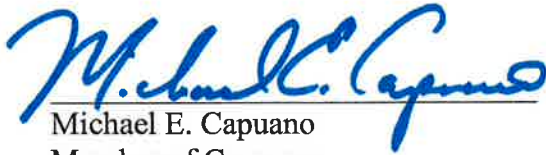
Alan Nunnelee  
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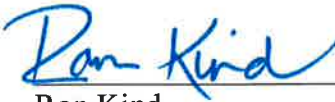
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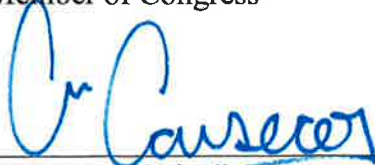
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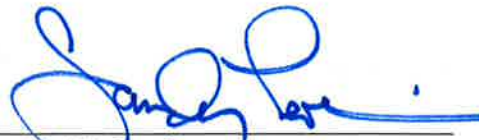


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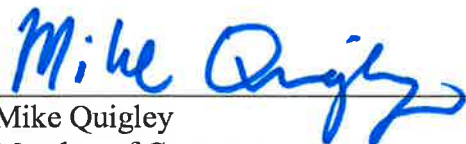
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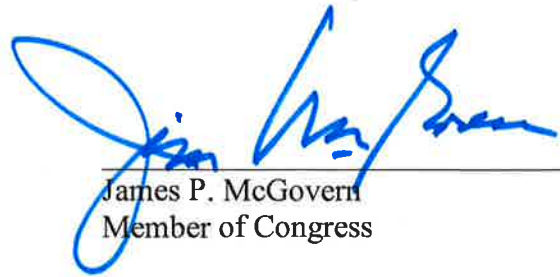
  
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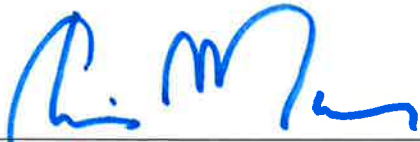
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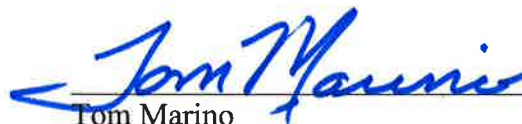
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Christopher S. Murphy  
Member of Congress



Tom Marino  
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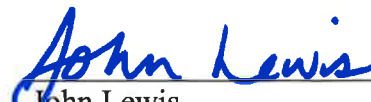
Gus M. Bilirakis  
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Dennis A. Ross  
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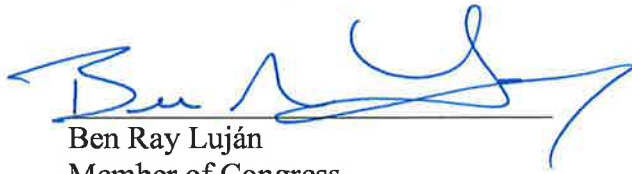



  
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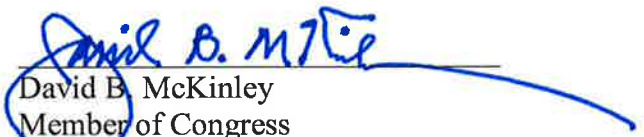
  
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Member of Congress

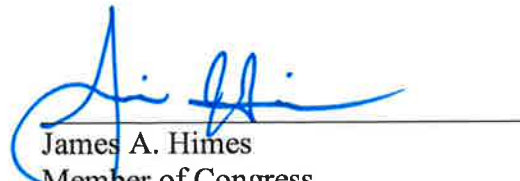


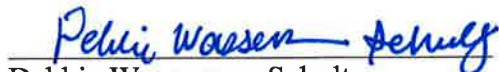
David N. Cicillini  
Member of Congress

  
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

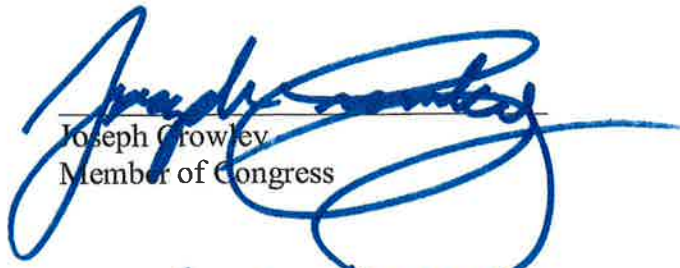
  
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress

  
Dennis J. Kucinich  
Member of Congress

  
Jim Matheson  
Member of Congress

  
Rosa L. DeLauro  
Member of Congress





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Joseph Crowley  
Member of Congress



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G. K. Butterfield  
Member of Congress



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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



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Melvin L. Watt  
Member of Congress



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Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Mo Brooks  
Member of Congress



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Joe Donnelly  
Member of Congress



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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



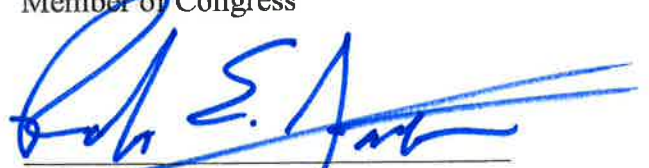
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Ben Chandler  
Member of Congress



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Peter Welch  
Member of Congress



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Robert E. Latta  
Member of Congress



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Jon Runyan  
Member of Congress



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Rush D. Holt  
Member of Congress



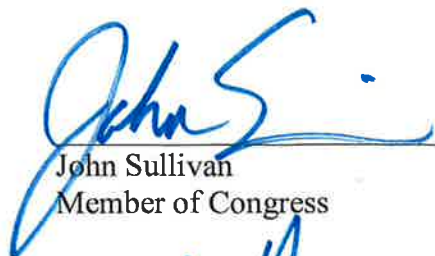
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Steve King  
Member of Congress



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John A. Yarmuth  
Member of Congress



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John Sullivan  
Member of Congress



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Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



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Martin Heinrich  
Member of Congress



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Steven M. Palazzo  
Member of Congress




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David Scott  
Member of Congress



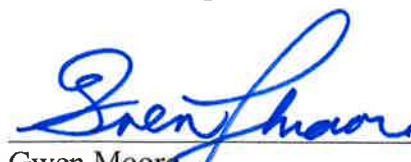
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Patrick T. McHenry  
Member of Congress



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Vern Buchanan  
Member of Congress



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Gwen Moore  
Member of Congress