

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2011

The Honorable Barack Obama
President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama,

We write today to express our deep concern over the continuing drought and famine in the Horn of Africa and the American public's lack of awareness of the crisis. As you know, this is the world's worst humanitarian crisis today – a dangerous mix of conflict, drought, and underdevelopment that has put thirteen million people in serious danger. Even as the current rains in the region bring brief respite to some areas, the reports of cholera among refugees in Kenya and the worsening fighting within Somalia underscore the complexity and severity of the humanitarian challenges in the region.

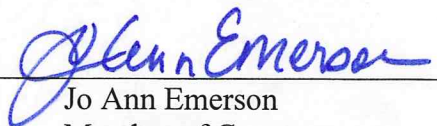
Your Administration has made repeated efforts to raise awareness about the humanitarian situation. Secretary of State Clinton and USAID Administrator Shah have spoken out frequently, and Dr. Biden's visit to the region over the summer helped publicize the seriousness of the famine. The FWD campaign, launched as a public service partnership with the Ad Council, has been a creative attempt to engage the American public and foster support for relief groups operating in the region. You have also made mention of the crisis in several of your speeches, including to the U.N. General Assembly.

Despite these efforts, the American public remains largely unaware of the scope and gravity of the crisis. Fundraising by U.S. relief groups remains low, hindering an adequate response. We see an urgent need to step up efforts to engage the American public, especially during the current holiday season. In particular, Mr. President, we encourage you and the First Lady to personally speak out on the crisis, much as you both did to great effect following the Haiti earthquake. When it comes to catalyzing public awareness and generosity, there is simply no substitute for your direct involvement.

Sincerely,



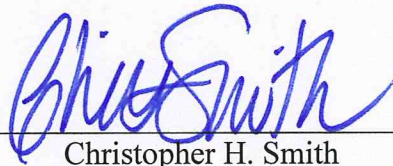
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



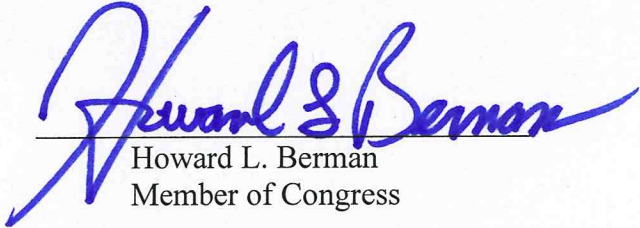
Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress



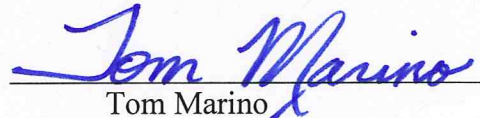
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



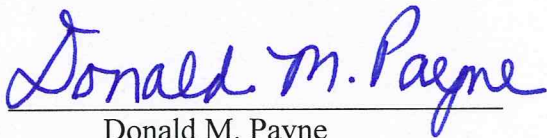
Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



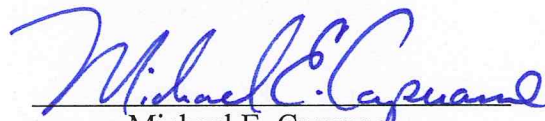
Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress



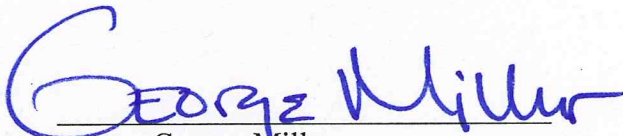
Tom Marino
Member of Congress



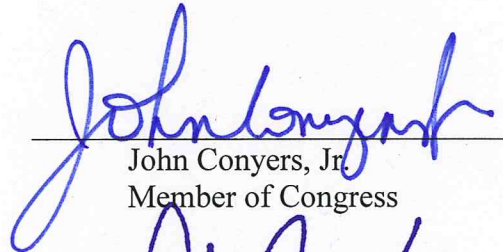
Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



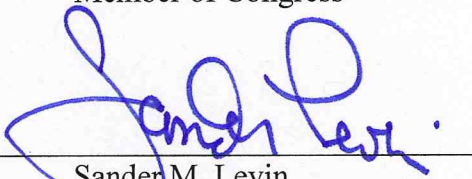
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



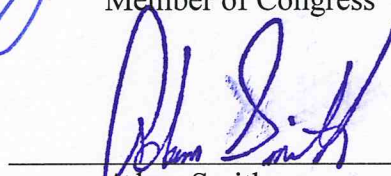
George Miller
Member of Congress



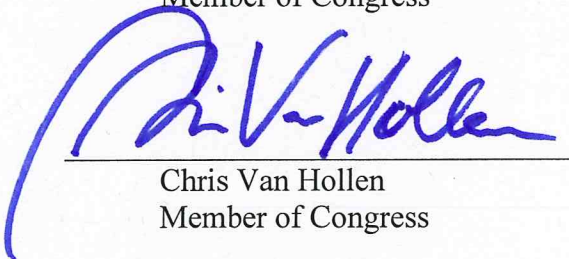
John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



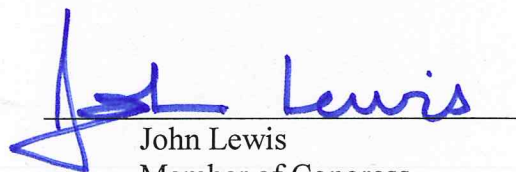
Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



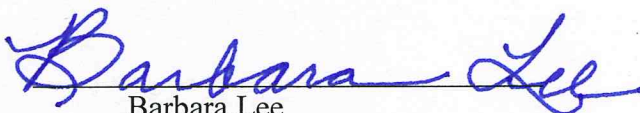
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



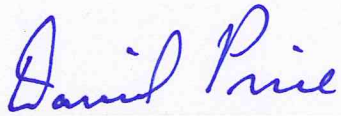
John Lewis
Member of Congress



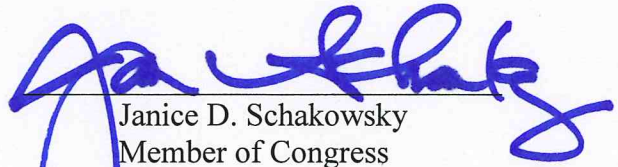
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



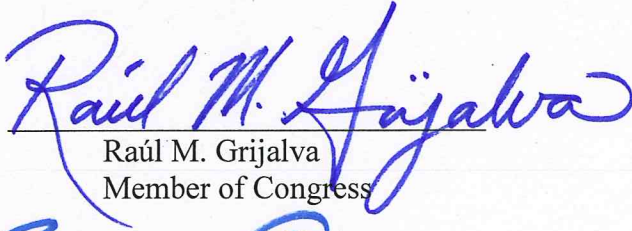
Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress



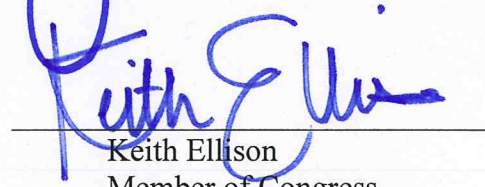
David E. Price
Member of Congress



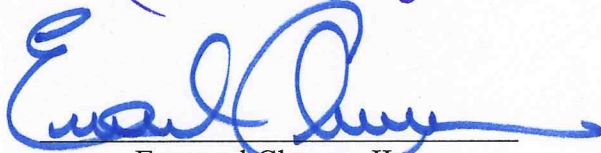
Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



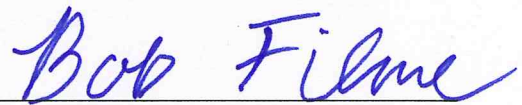
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



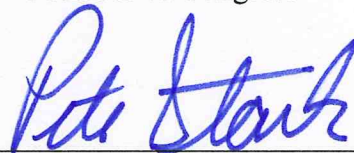
Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



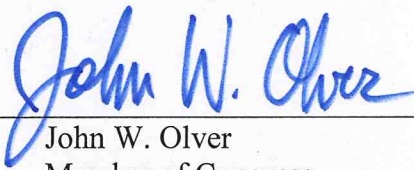
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



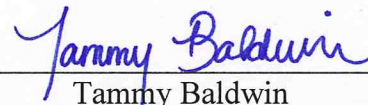
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



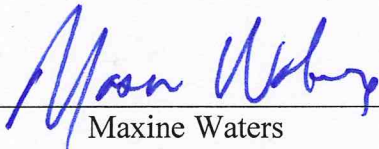
Fortney "Pete" Stark
Member of Congress



John W. Olver
Member of Congress



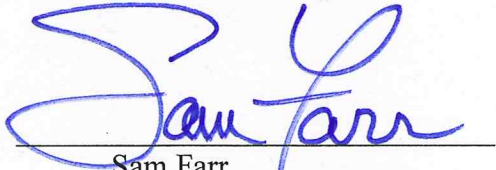
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



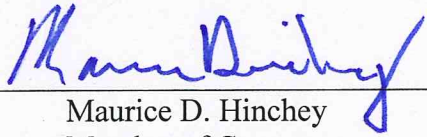
Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



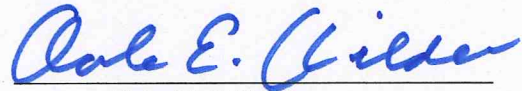
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



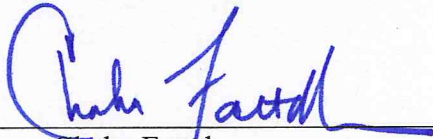
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



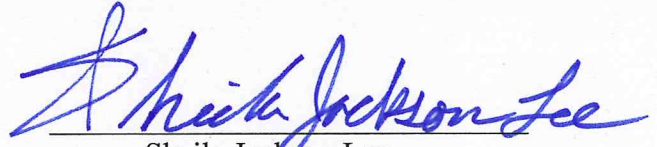
Maurice D. Hinchey
Member of Congress



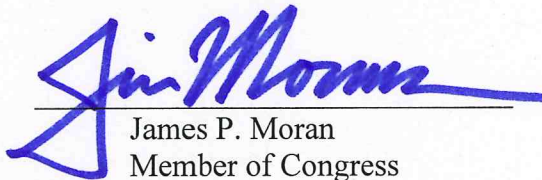
Dale E. Kildee
Member of Congress



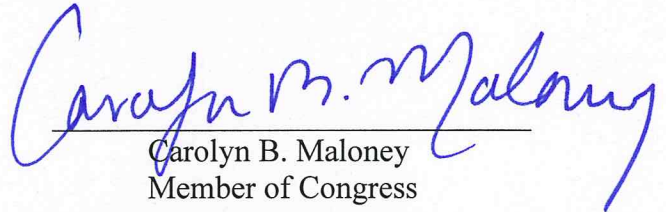
Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



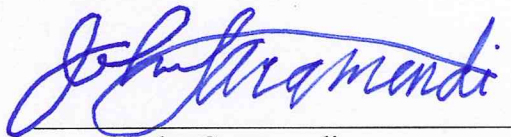
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



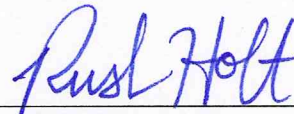
James P. Moran
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



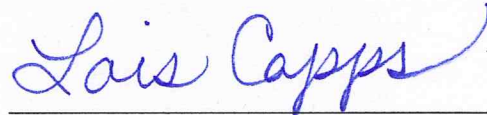
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



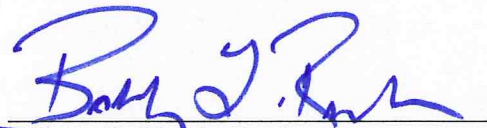
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



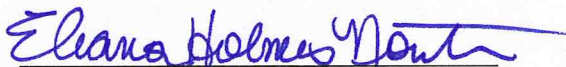
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



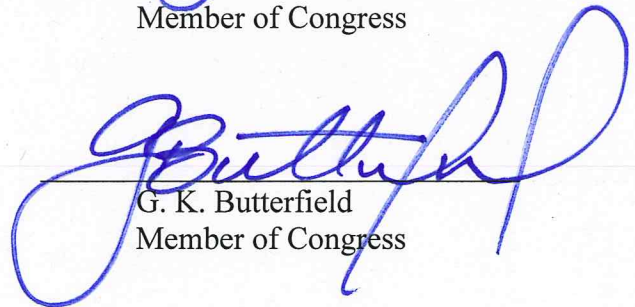
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
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Eliot L. Engel

Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

Joseph Crowley

Joseph Crowley
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Jim McDermott

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Lynn Woolsey

Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress

Michael Honda

Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress

Edolphus Towns

Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress

Hank Johnson

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

Laura Richardson

Laura Richardson
Member of Congress

Yvette D. Clarke

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress

Luis V. Gutierrez

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

André Carson

André Carson
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard

Lucille Roybal-Allard
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