

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Co-Chair
Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murray and Congressman Hensarling:

We appreciate the hard work you are doing as members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction and applaud your willingness to tackle the difficult fiscal issues facing our Nation.

However we are very concerned about any discussion to include \$3 billion in cuts to Medicare Part B reimbursement for drugs and biologics medicines that fight cancer and other serious diseases. We believe these potential cuts, if enacted, would adversely affect cancer care in the U.S.

As you know Congress reformed Medicare Part B reimbursement as part of the 2003 Medicare Modernization Act, and payment amounts for drugs and biologicals were then dramatically reduced. Payments are now set using the Medicare Average Sales Price (ASP) system, which includes the actual prices paid by physicians and other drug purchasers.

The Medicare ASP is a market-driven reimbursement mechanism that has driven down Medicare costs. In fact, the Congressional Budget Office estimated that Medicare would save almost \$16 billion over 10 years by reducing payments for Part B drugs using the current ASP system compared to the old reimbursement system. The Medicare Payment Advisory Commission (MedPAC) that advises Congress on Medicare matters said that ASP has resulted in, "substantial price savings for Medicare on nearly all drugs and those payment rate changes drove decreased spending."

Enacting cuts to ASP could also worsen an already troubling access problem, as community oncology practices are already struggling even as demand for cancer care is now starting to exceed the supply of oncologists. According to one report, in the last 3 1/2 years alone, 199 cancer clinics have closed and 369 practices, with multiple clinic locations, are struggling financially. And it is predicted that over the next ten years there will be an

oncologist shortage for one in four cancer patients, and enacting \$3 billion in cancer cuts will only exacerbate this problem.


The U.S. has the best cancer care delivery system in the world. Eighty-four percent of Americans receive quality, compassionate care in the community cancer setting. It is imperative that Congress continues to ensure that cancer patients across the nation can continue to have access to lifesaving medical treatments.

It is for this reason that we urge you not to sacrifice cancer care while seeking deficit reduction solutions.

Sincerely,



Leonard Lance
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



Patrick Meehan
Member of Congress



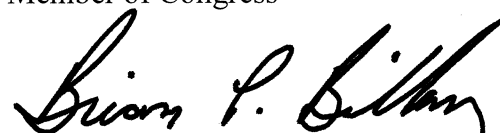
Mike Honda
Member of Congress



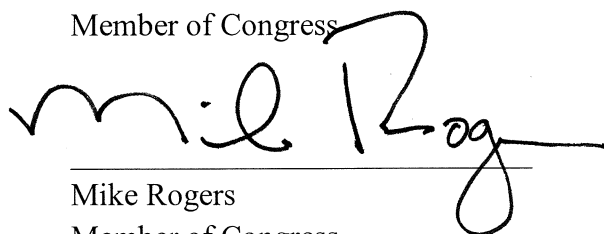
Dennis A. Ross
Member of Congress



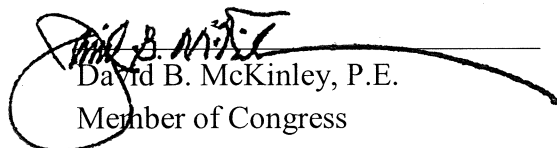
John Barrow
Member of Congress



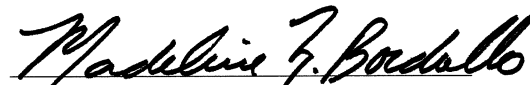
Brian Bilbray
Member of Congress



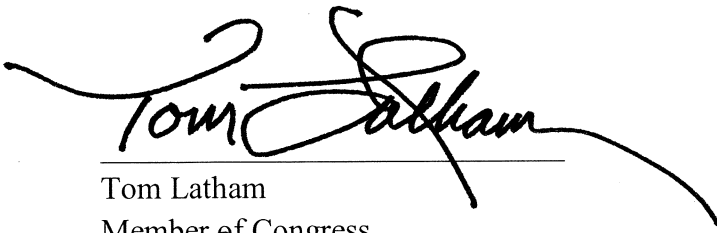
Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



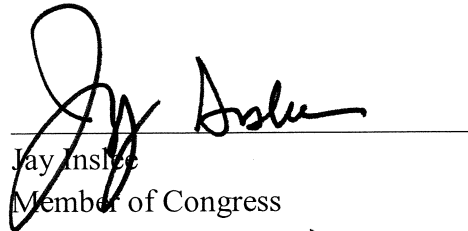
David B. McKinley, P.E.
Member of Congress



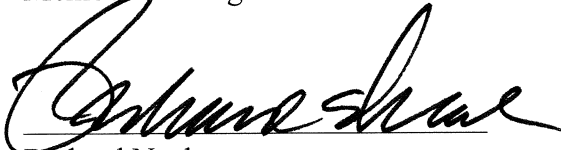
Madeleine Z. Bordallo
Member of Congress



Tom Latham
Member of Congress



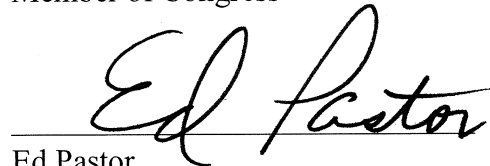
Jay Inslee
Member of Congress



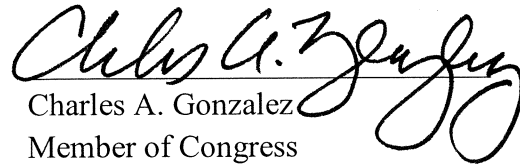
Richard Neal
Member of Congress



Ted Poe
Member of Congress



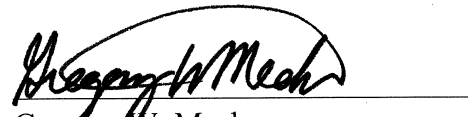
Ed Pastor
Member of Congress



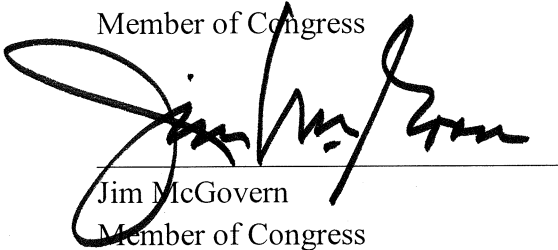
Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Jim McGovern
Member of Congress



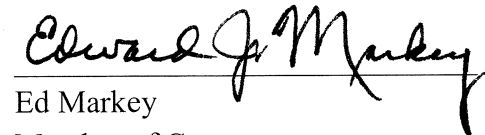
Howard Coble
Member of Congress



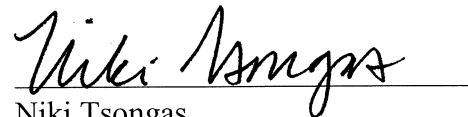
Lou Barletta
Member of Congress



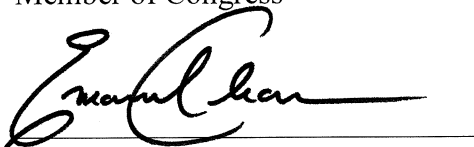
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



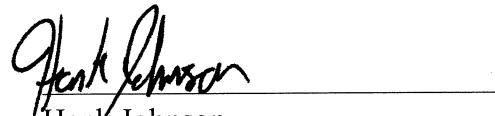
Ed Markey
Member of Congress



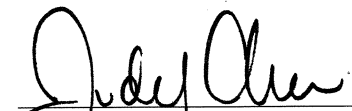
Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



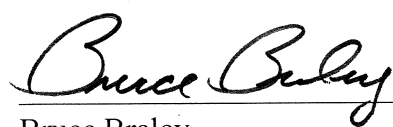
Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress




Hank Johnson
Member of Congress



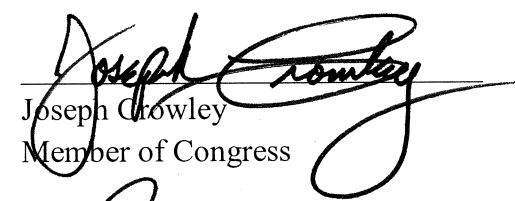
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



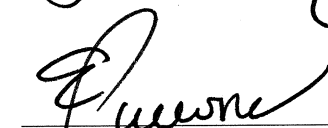
Bruce Braley
Member of Congress



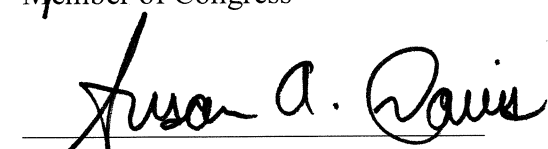
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



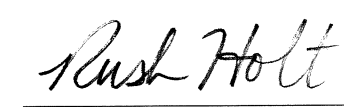
Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress




Edolphus "Ed" Towns
Member of Congress



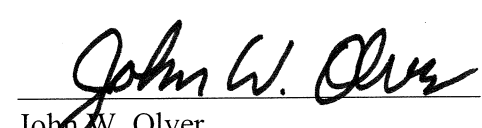
Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



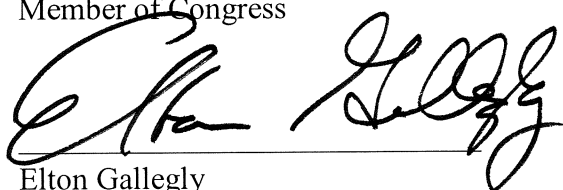
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



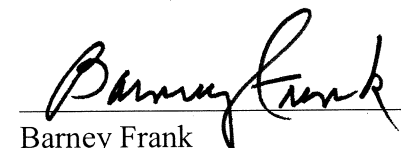
Gene Green
Member of Congress




John W. Olver
Member of Congress




Elton Gallegly
Member of Congress



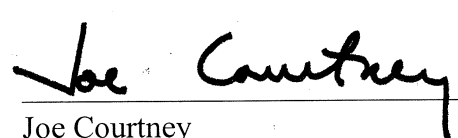
Barney Frank
Member of Congress



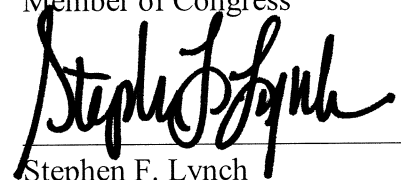
Andre Carson
Member of Congress



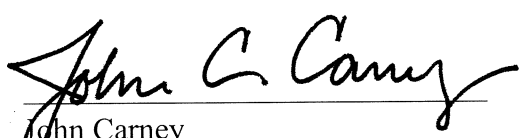
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



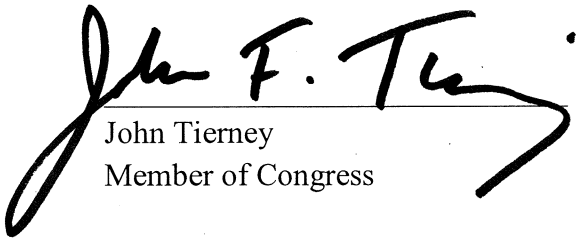
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



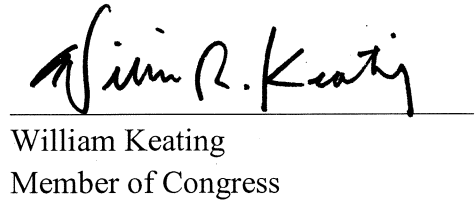
John Carney
Member of Congress

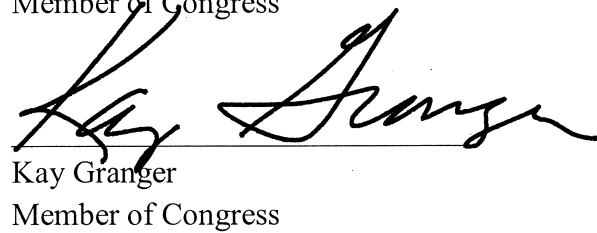

John Tierney
Member of Congress

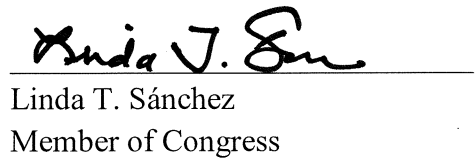

Larry Kissell
Member of Congress

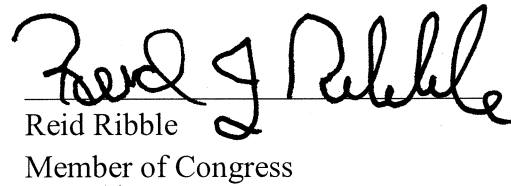

Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress

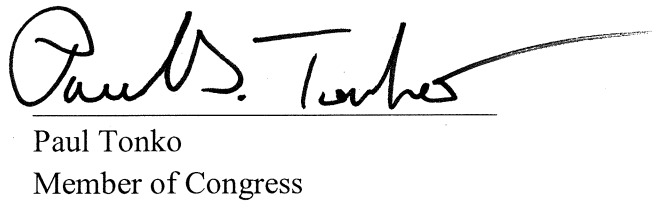

Lois Capps
Member of Congress


William Keating
Member of Congress


Kay Granger
Member of Congress

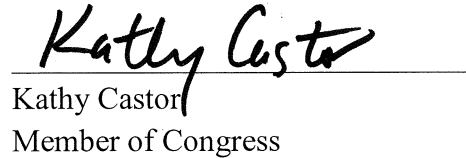

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

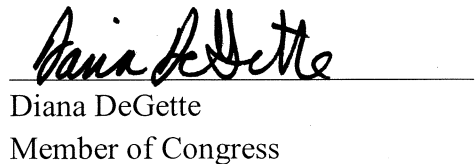

Reid Ribble
Member of Congress

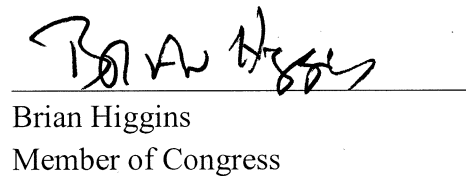

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

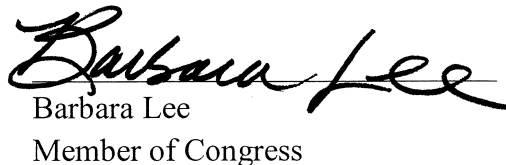

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

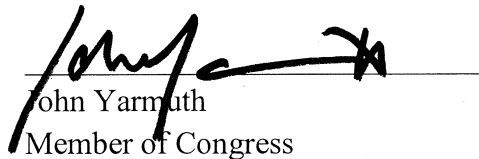

Bill Flores
Member of Congress

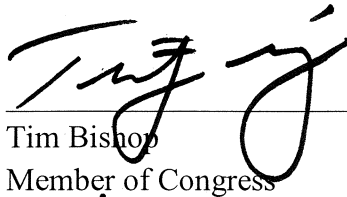

Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

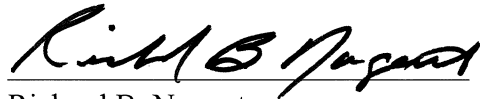

Brian Higgins
Member of Congress


Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

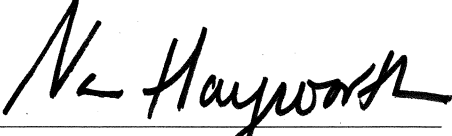

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Tim Bishop
Member of Congress



Richard B. Nugent
Member of Congress



Nan Hayworth, MD
Member of Congress

cc:

The Honorable Max Baucus

The Honorable Xavier Becerra

The Honorable Dave Camp

The Honorable James E. Clyburn

The Honorable Jon Kyl

The Honorable John Kerry

The Honorable Rob Portman

The Honorable Pat Toomey

The Honorable Fred Upton

The Honorable Chris Van Hollen