

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 30, 2014

President Barack Obama  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We understand that the PGA of America, PGA Tour, and USGA have come together to recommend Mr. Charlie Sifford to receive a Presidential Medal of Freedom. We write to wholeheartedly endorse their recommendation to bestow this great honor on Mr. Sifford, the “Jackie Robinson of golf.”


An African American born in North Carolina in 1922, Mr. Sifford persevered through the countless barriers and indignities of the Jim Crow South to excel at the game of golf. In the years of his physical prime, from 1952 through 1956, he won five consecutive National Negro Opens but was denied the opportunity to compete at the highest level on the PGA Tour because of his skin color. When given the opportunity to compete against numerous touring pros at the 1957 Long Beach Open, not an official PGA Tour event, he won. Still, the PGA Tour refused to budge until Mr. Sifford took them to court—and won there too. In 1960, at age 38, when many professional golfers’ careers are on the downswing, Mr. Sifford became a PGA Tour rookie.

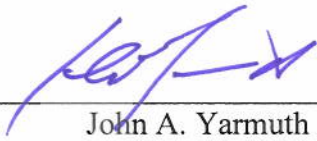
Despite his relatively advanced age and being forced to endure unequal treatment at tournaments around the country, Mr. Sifford made the most of his belated opportunity on the PGA Tour, winning the 1967 Greater Hartford Open and the 1969 Los Angeles Open. In 1975, he won the Senior PGA Championship, then the single high-profile tournament for golfers over 50. Five years later, he was a founding member of the Senior PGA Tour, winning the Suntree Classic in the tour’s inaugural year. In 2004, Mr. Sifford was enshrined into the World Golf Hall of Fame, the first black golfer of any nationality to be so honored.

The courage of Charlie Sifford opened the gates of golf to people of color across the world. While no award can restore the right of an athlete to compete that was unjustly denied decades ago, bestowing a Presidential Medal of Freedom upon him would rightly remember this injustice and extol the attributes of determination and persistence that enabled him to ultimately prevail. Our country is a better place because of Charlie Sifford, and this high honor would be an appropriate recognition of his contribution. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

  
James E. Clyburn

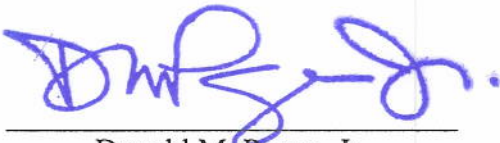
  
Spencer Bachus



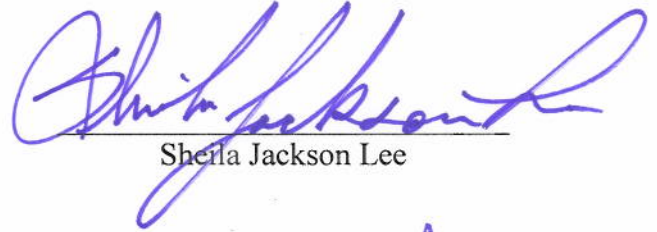
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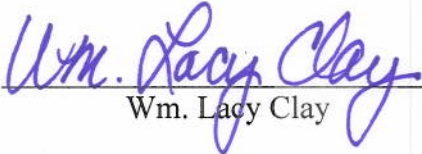
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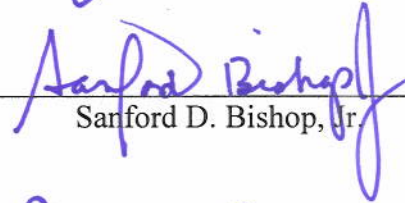
Donald M. Payne, Jr.



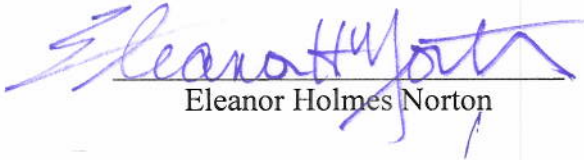
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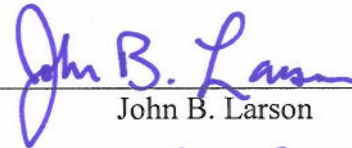
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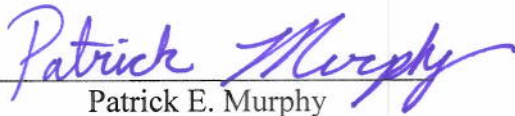
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.



Eleanor Holmes Norton



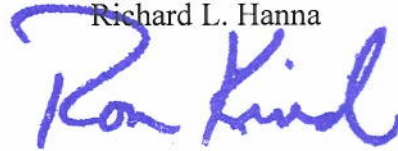
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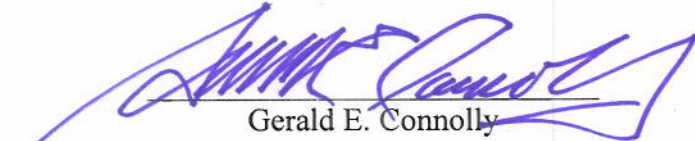
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Richard L. Hanna



Ron Kind



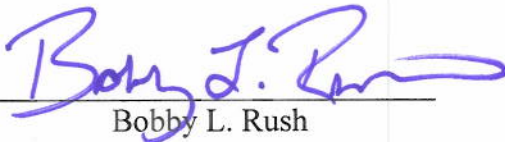
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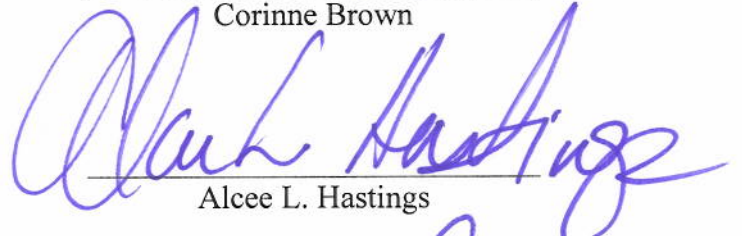
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Corinne Brown



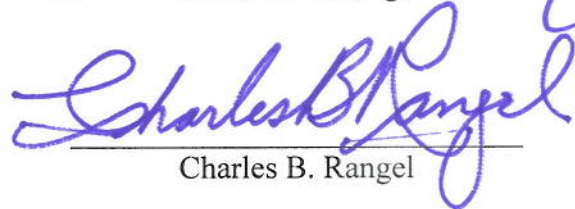
Bobby L. Rush



Alcee L. Hastings



Terri A. Sewell



Charles B. Rangel



Howard Coble



Joe Courtney




  
Walter B. Jones

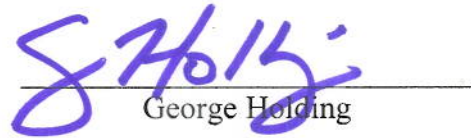
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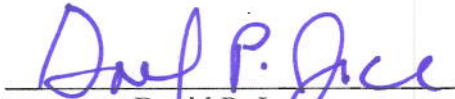
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Robert Pittenger

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George Holding

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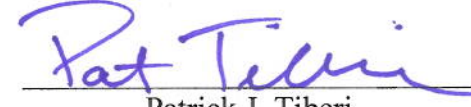
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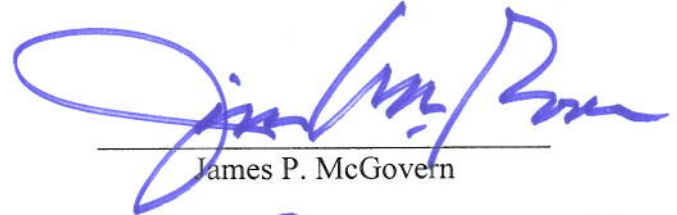
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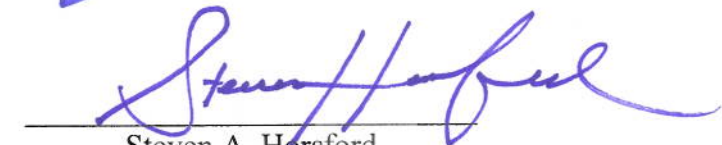
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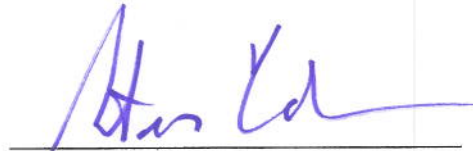
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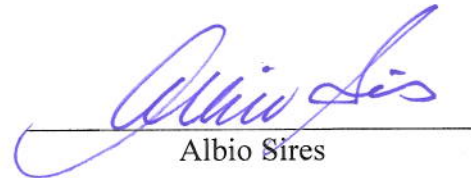
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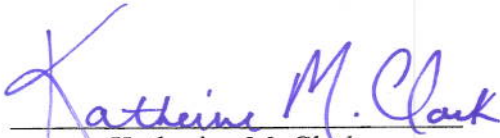
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Steve Cohen

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Albio Sires

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Katherine M. Clark

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Robert B. Aderholt

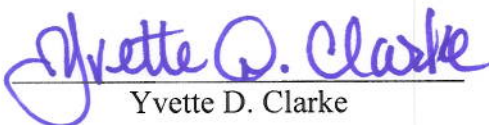
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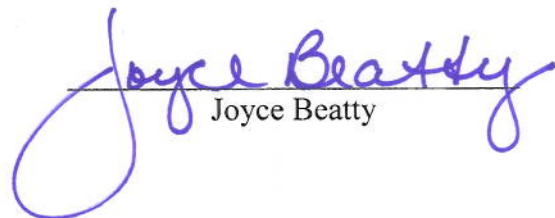
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Robin L. Kelly

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Yvette D. Clarke

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Joyce Beatty

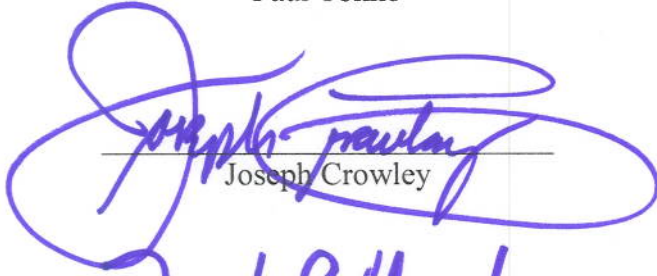
Joyce Beatty


  
Eddie Bernice Johnson

  
Karen Bass

  
Paul Tonko

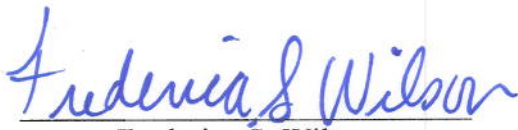
  
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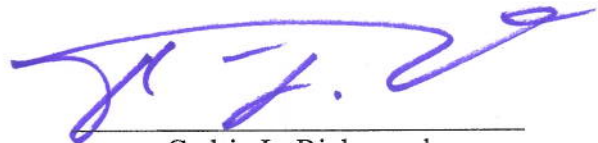
  
Joseph Crowley

  
Hakeem S. Jeffries

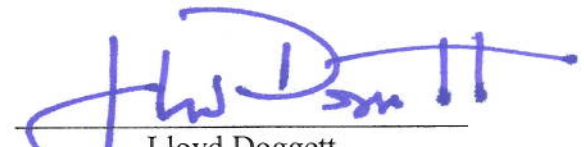
  
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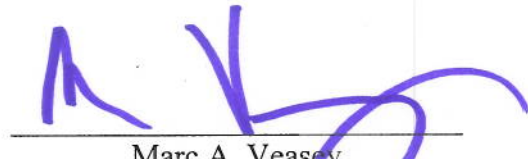
  
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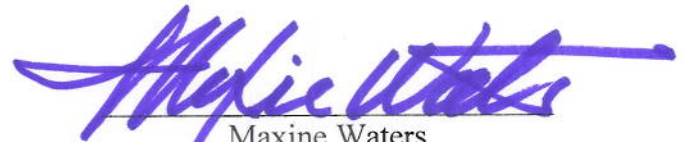
  
Frederica S. Wilson


  
Cedric L. Richmond

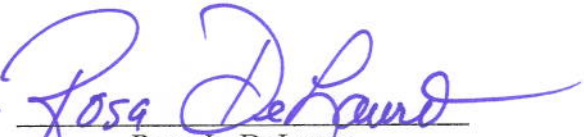
  
Chris Van Hollen

  
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Marc A. Veasey

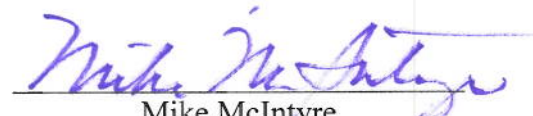
  
Maxine Waters

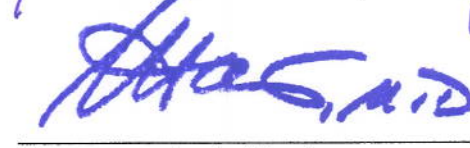
  
Luis V. Gutiérrez

  
Rosa L. DeLauro

  
Joseph R. Pitts

  
Patrick T. McHenry

  
Mike McIntyre

  
Andy Harris

*Julia Brownley*  
Julia Brownley

*Joe Wilson*  
Joe Wilson