

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 14, 2011

Secretary Kathleen Sebelius
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Secretary Sebelius,

We write to express our disappointment over your decision not to make the emergency contraceptive Plan B available over the counter for all girls of reproductive age.

Emergency contraception is a safe and effective medication that prevents pregnancy if taken soon after sexual intercourse. As you know, emergency contraception does not cause an abortion, but prevents pregnancy. Emergency contraception has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) since 1999. In 2006, the FDA approved emergency contraception for over the counter sales for individuals ages 18 and older, and it has been available over the counter for women age 17 and older since 2009.

Providing emergency contraception over the counter for all girls of reproductive age would be consistent with the policies of many countries around the world, including the United Kingdom. Denying over the counter access will harm the effort to prevent unintended pregnancies.

Science has confirmed that the drug is safe and effective with appropriate use and health experts have demonstrated that an age restriction is unnecessary. Your decision marks the first time a Health and Human Services Secretary has overruled FDA scientists. This is a profoundly troubling outcome from an Administration that stated science should be the foundation for such decisions. As you look ahead to future decisions affecting the health of millions of women, including those relating to birth control access, we urge you to put science first.

Sincerely,



RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress



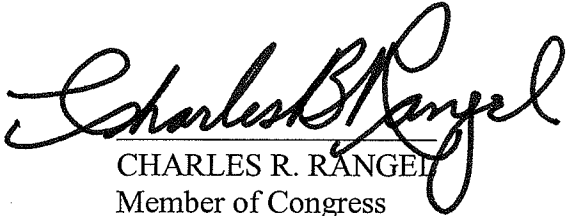
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Member of Congress



DIANA DEGETTE
Member of Congress



LOUISE SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress



CHARLES R. RANGEL
Member of Congress



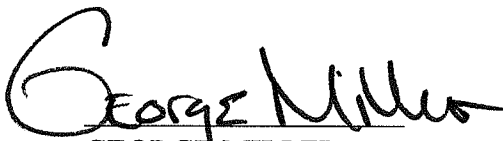
BARBARA LEE
Member of Congress



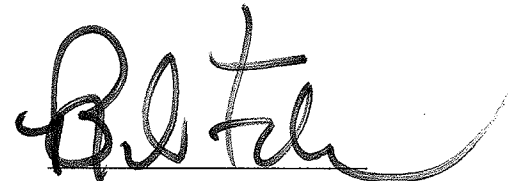
SAM FARR
Member of Congress



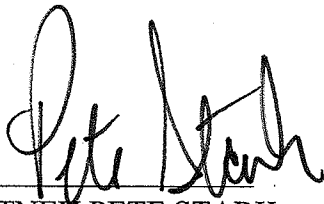
CHELLIE PINGREE
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GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress



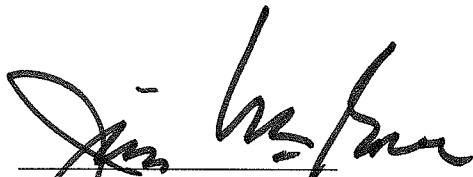
BOB FILNER
Member of Congress




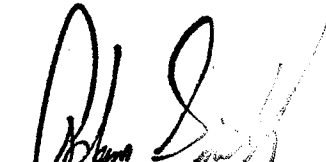
FORTNEY PETE STARK
Member of Congress




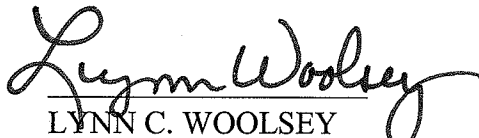
MIKE QUIGLEY
Member of Congress

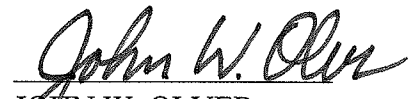

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PETER A. DEFAZIO
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ADAM SMITH
Member of Congress



GARY L. ACKERMAN
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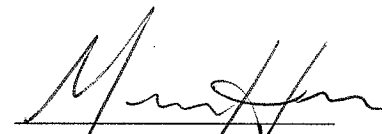

LYNN C. WOOLSEY
Member of Congress



JOHN W. OLVER
Member of Congress

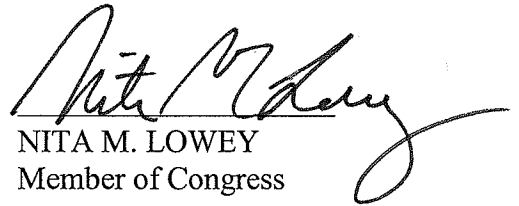

LLOYD DOGGETT
Member of Congress



ZOE LOFGREN
Member of Congress



CHRISTOPHER S. MURPHY
Member of Congress

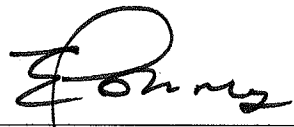

MICHAEL M. HONDA
Member of Congress



KATHY CASTOR
Member of Congress

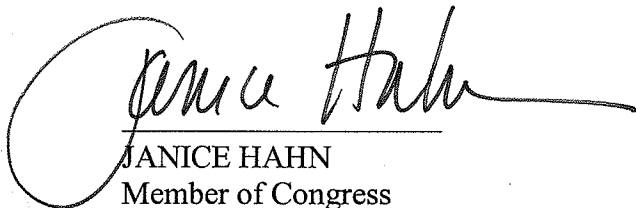

NITA M. LOWEY
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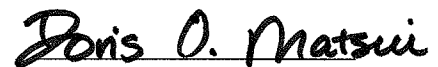

NIKI TSONGAS
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THEODORE E. DEUTCH
Member of Congress



EDOLPHUS TOWNS
Member of Congress


STEVEN R. ROTHMAN
Member of Congress

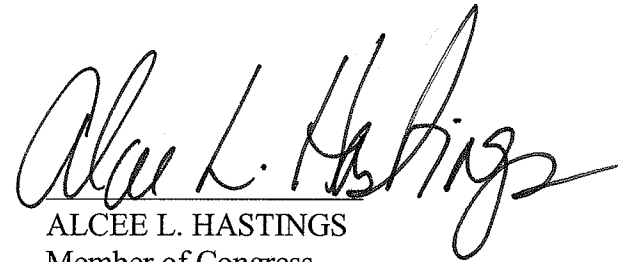

JANICE HAHN
Member of Congress

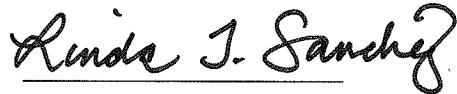

DORIS O. MATSUI
Member of Congress



LUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of Congress

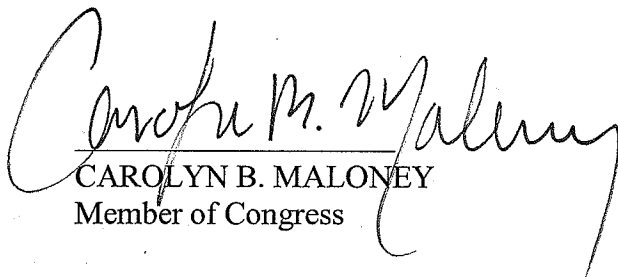

ROSA L. DELAURO
Member of Congress



LAURA RICHARDSON
Member of Congress

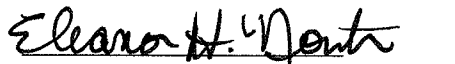

ALCEE L. HASTINGS
Member of Congress

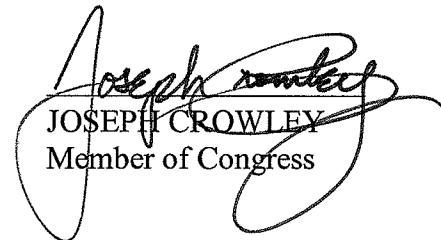

LINDA T. SANCHEZ
Member of Congress

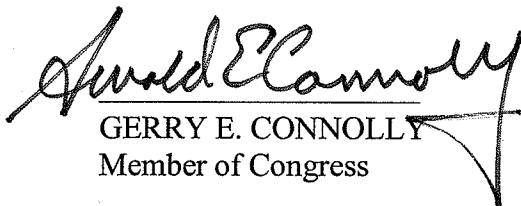

JERROLD NADLER
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CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


STEVE COHEN
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ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON
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GERRY E. CONNOLLY
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JESSE L. JACKSON, JR.
Member of Congress

William R. Keating
WILLIAM R. KEATING
Member of Congress

Jay Inslee
JAY INSLEE
Member of Congress