

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 17, 2012

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

Dear Mr. President,

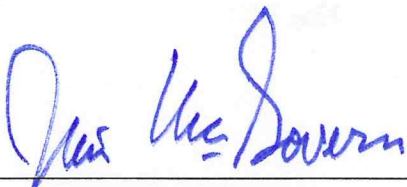
We write to express our support for the Administration's announcement on February 1st that the United States will complete combat operations in Afghanistan by the end of next year.

From information reported in the media, the U.S. intends to transition from major combat operations in Afghanistan to a "training, advice and assist role" by the middle-to-latter part of 2013. We applaud this announcement by Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta to accelerate the transition away from combat operations, and it provides assurance that the timeframe outlined in your 2009 West Point and 2010 NATO speeches will be carried out. As you know, many of us support an even more rapid withdrawal of all our troops from Afghanistan.

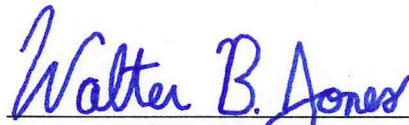
The majority of Americans want a safe and orderly military withdrawal from Afghanistan as quickly as possible, as recent public opinion polls indicate. The desire by the American people for an accelerated transition in Afghanistan was reflected in votes taken in Congress last year, in both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate during their respective debates on amendments offered by Representatives McGovern and Jones and by Senator Merkley to the FY 2012 National Defense Authorization Act. These votes show there is strong bipartisan political support to take bold steps regarding U.S. policy in Afghanistan.

The past 10 years have cost America dearly in the blood and sacrifice of our military servicemen and women and their families, and in our nation's fiscal health and security. The United States intervened in Afghanistan to destroy al Qaeda's safe haven, remove the Taliban government that sheltered al Qaeda, and pursue those who planned the September 11th attacks on the United States; those objectives have largely been met and no longer require a large presence of combat troops in Afghanistan. While questions remain about the details of the announced transition – when and how quickly U.S. troops will be coming home, the number and purpose of troops that might remain in Afghanistan and for how long a period, the costs and the savings of accelerating the completion of combat operations – the February 1st announcement clearly signals that now is the moment to initiate the transition, end the war in Afghanistan and bring our troops home.

Sincerely,



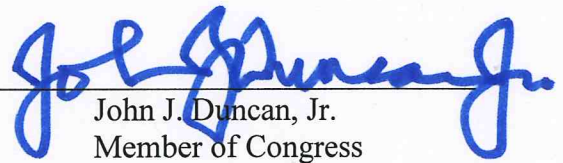
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



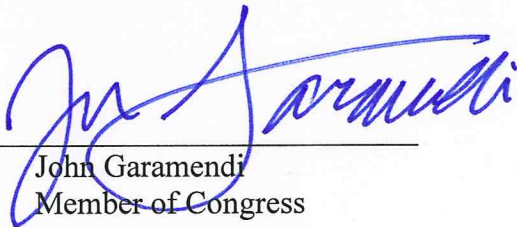
Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



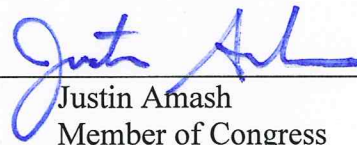
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



John J. Duncan, Jr.
Member of Congress



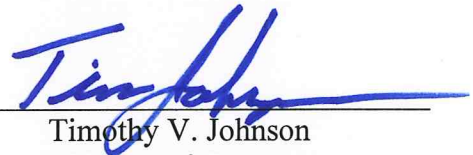
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



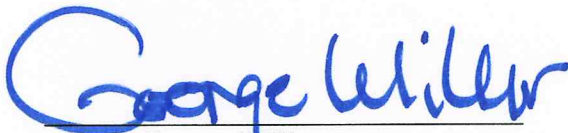
Justin Amash
Member of Congress



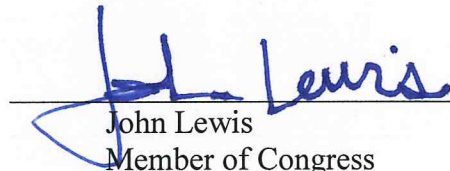
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



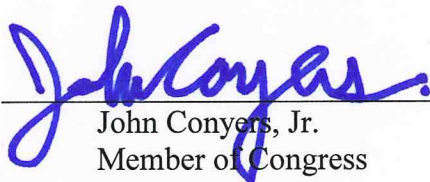
Timothy V. Johnson
Member of Congress




George Miller
Member of Congress



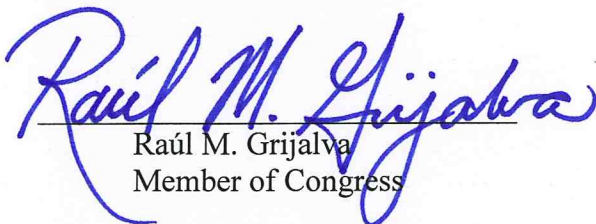
John Lewis
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



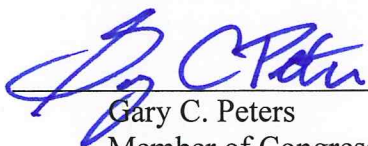
Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



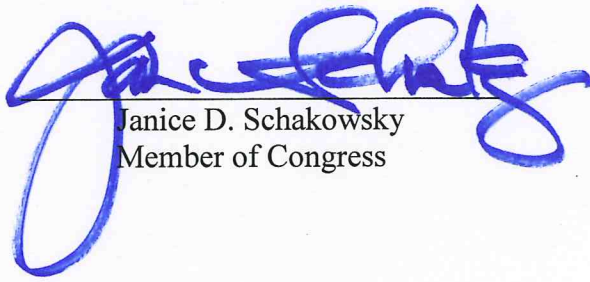
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Gary C. Peters
Member of Congress



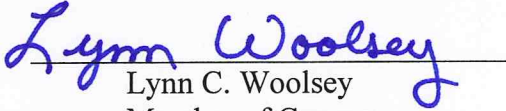
Jesse L. Jackson, Jr.
Member of Congress



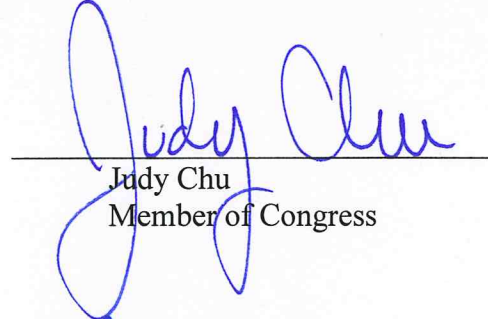
Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



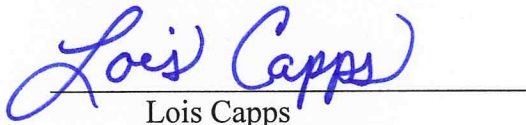
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



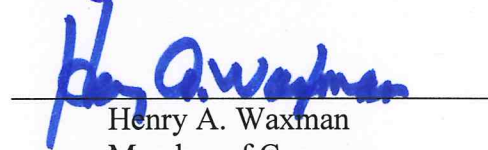
Lynn C. Woolsey
Member of Congress



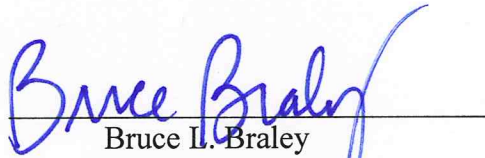
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



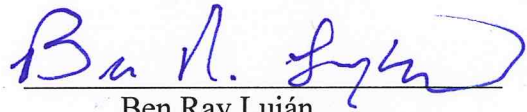
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Bruce L. Braley
Member of Congress



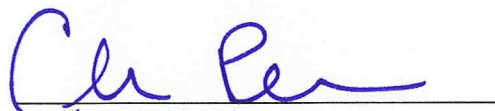
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress




Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress



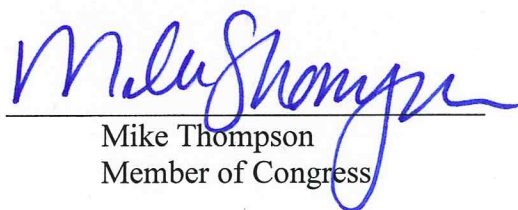
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress




Fortney "Pete" Stark
Member of Congress





Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

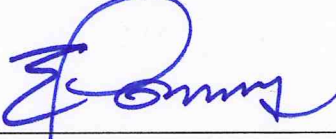


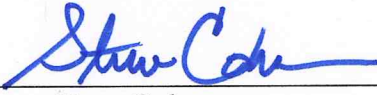
Bob Filner
Member of Congress

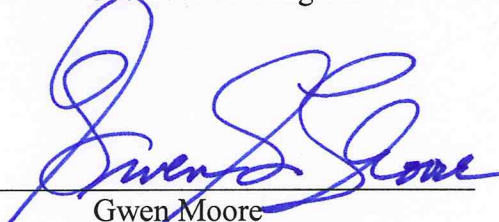

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

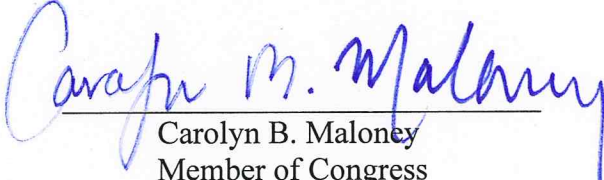

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

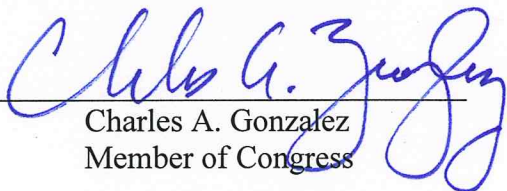

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

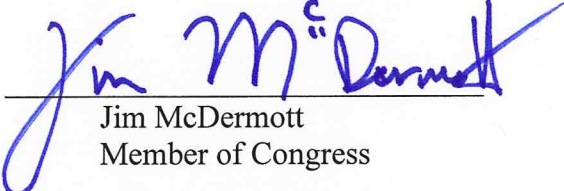

Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress

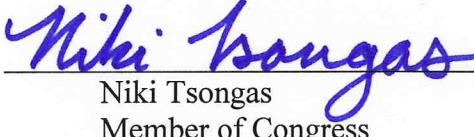

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

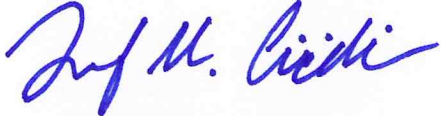

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

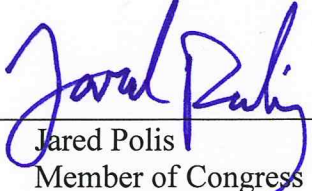

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress

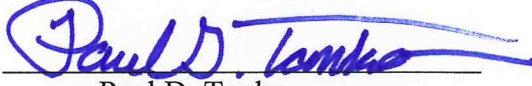

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

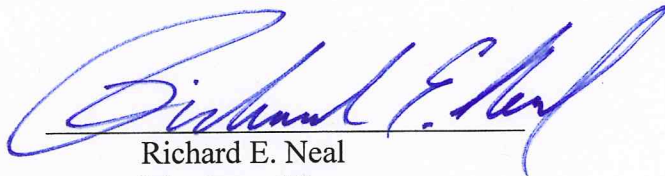

Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress


David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

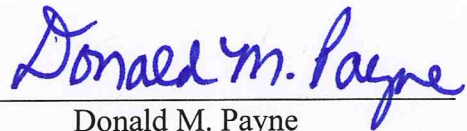

Jared Polis
Member of Congress


Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress


Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



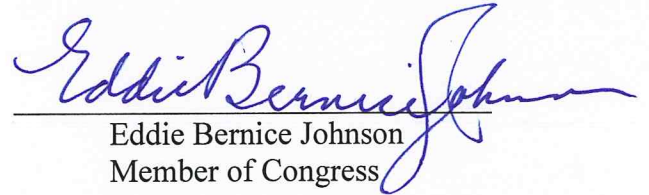
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress



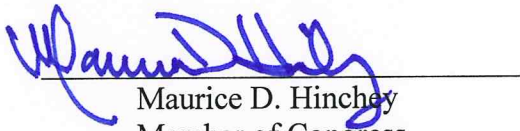
Donald M. Payne
Member of Congress



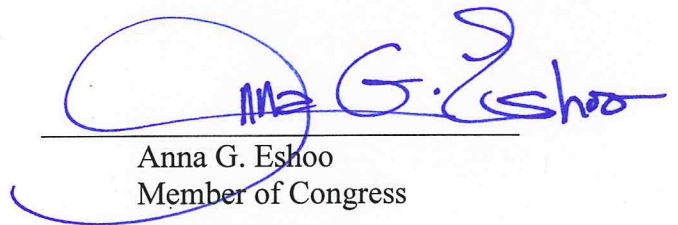
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



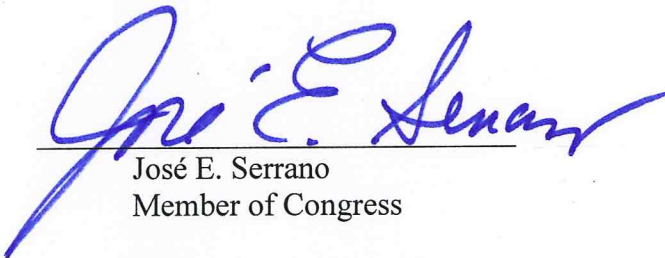
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



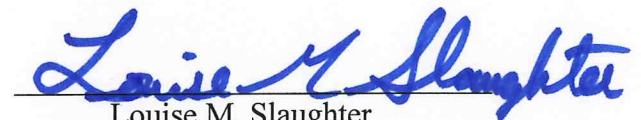
Maurice D. Hinchey
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



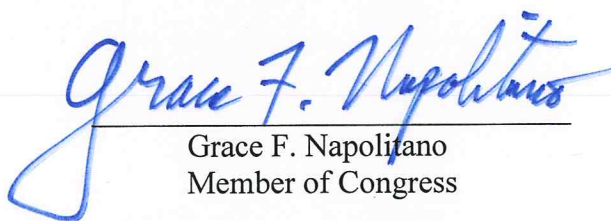
Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



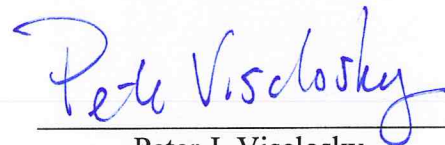
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



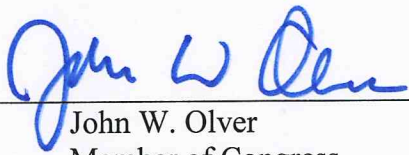
Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



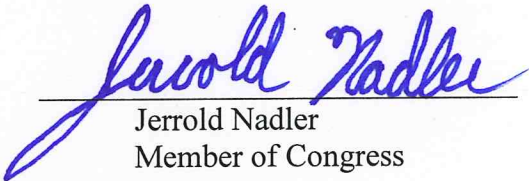
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



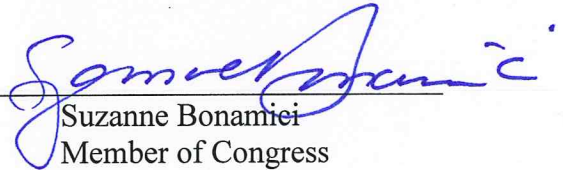
John W. Olver
Member of Congress



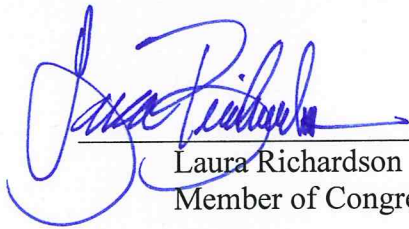
David E. Price
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



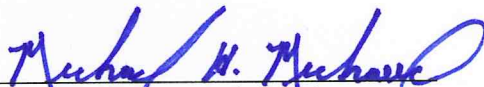
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



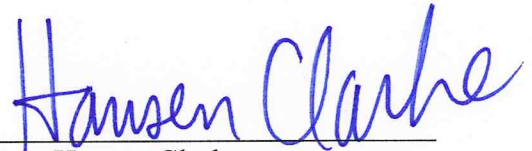
Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress



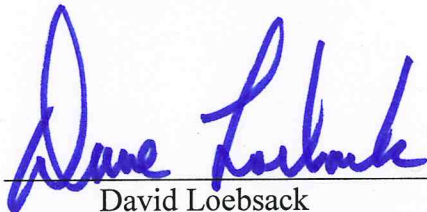
Hansen Clarke
Member of Congress



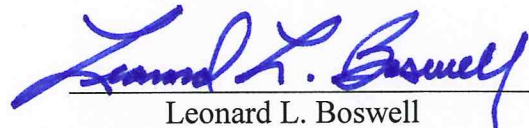
Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress




Mazie K. Hirono
Member of Congress



David Loebsack
Member of Congress



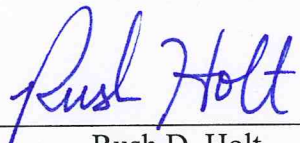
Leonard L. Boswell
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



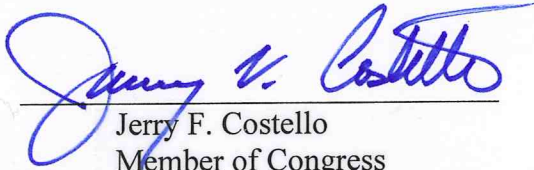
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



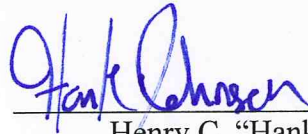
Rush D. Holt
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



Jerry F. Costello
Member of Congress



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



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



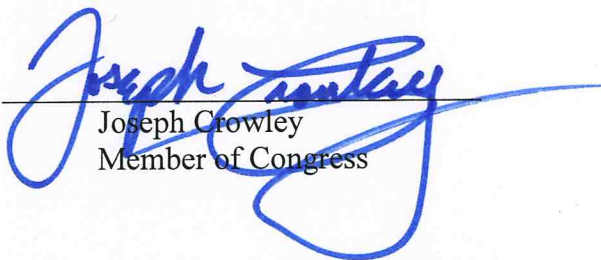
Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress




Brad Miller
Member of Congress



Dennis J. Kucinich
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

Bayless

Human Cable

Ed Whitt

Dana Robinson

of Ann Emerson

Signatures on Page 8:

Roscoe G. Bartlett (MD)

Howard Coble (NC)

Ed Whitfield (KY)

Dana Rohrabacher (CA)

Jo Ann Emerson (MO)