

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

March 27, 2026

The Honorable Robert Aderholt  
Chair  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on  
Labor, Health and Human Services,  
Education, and Related Agencies  
1036 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Aderholt and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As you consider Fiscal Year 2027 (FY27) Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies appropriations, we respectfully request \$14.27 billion for Head Start.<sup>1</sup> Head Start is our nation's flagship early learning program, supporting healthy child development and serving as a lifeline for the most vulnerable children and families in our country. This investment will provide a cost-of-living adjustment (our primary request for FY27), allow programs to address critical local priorities, increase access to fresh and nutritious food, and expand recruitment and development of staff for American Indian/Alaska Native (AI/AN) programs. In addition, investments would address the demonstrated need for expansion of Early Head Start and facility improvements through separate competitive grant programs administered by the Office of Head Start (OHS).

Head Start served nearly 700,000 children and their families across every congressional district in FY26. In that time, Head Start programs conducted over 3.5 million home visits, helped over 673,000 children stay up-to-date on diagnostic treatments, ensured that over 566,000 children received preventative dental care, and involved more than 201,000 fathers in their children's education.

Investing in Head Start is fiscally responsible. Economic research has shown that high-quality early childhood programs, like Head Start, generate an annual return on investment of more than 13%.<sup>2</sup> Children who attend Head Start are more likely to have healthy eating patterns, complete high school, enroll in and graduate from college, and be gainfully employed. They are also less likely to experience poor health, be arrested or incarcerated, continue to live in poverty, or need public assistance as adults.

Our funding request would help programs maintain the level of quality needed to benefit Head Start children, families, staff, and the communities they serve, through the following:

- A cost-of living adjustment (COLA) of 4.97% (\$615 million) for Head Start in FY27. While inflation since the beginning of FY24 has reached 5.57% according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics CPI Calculator,<sup>3</sup> Head Start has received a COLA of just 0.6%. Providing a COLA for Head Start is our top priority, as programs are struggling with hiring and retaining quality staff, impacting both the quality of service and continuity of care.
- \$537 million in Quality Improvement Funds (QIF) for FY27 to help local Head Start programs address barriers to full enrollment, maximize capacity, and deliver lasting impact for the children

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<sup>1</sup> Head Start includes all of the following: Head Start, Early Head Start, Migrant and Seasonal Head Start, American Indian and Alaska Native Head Start, and Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership programs.

<sup>2</sup> "Quantifying The Life-Cycle Benefits Of A Prototypical Early Childhood Program," National Bureau of Economic Research, Working Paper 23479, June 2017.

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation\\_calculator.htm](https://www.bls.gov/data/inflation_calculator.htm)

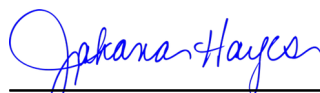
and families in each community they serve. QIF allows Head Start programs to address critical local needs, identified in partnership with OHS.

- \$206 million in FY27 funding for programs to access fresh and nutritious food beyond Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) funding. For many children, Head Start meals are often the only real meals they receive. However, CACFP funds are often insufficient and programs must look for additional funding to make sure participating children can access nutritious and healthy food.
- \$13 million in FY27 to expand the Tribal Colleges and Universities–Head Start Partnership Program and increase the percentage of teachers in AI/AN communities receiving bachelor’s degrees. The Tribal Colleges and Universities–Head Start Partnership Program is critical to expanding the number of staff culturally and linguistically suited to address the growing need for Head Start services in AI/AN communities.
- \$200 million in FY27 funding for a competitive grant program to be administered by OHS to expand Early Head Start. Many fully staffed, fully enrolled Early Head Start programs have lengthy waitlists and are looking to expand. Fewer than 15% of programs that applied for expansion funds in 2024 received funding, demonstrating a significant need to expand the program.
- \$339 million in FY27 funding for a competitive grant program to be administered by OHS to repair, renovate, rebuild, or replace Head Start facilities. Many aging Head Start facilities require additional federal investment for high-quality repairs and improvements. A FY15 OHS report projected that need at over \$3.8 billion, and inflation has greatly increased that number.

For decades, Congress has united around Head Start to provide high-quality early learning and support for underserved children and their families throughout our country. FY27 represents an opportunity to reinvigorate this vital federal-to-local partnership. Congress must continue to invest in and allow Head Start to continue putting children and families on the path to success in school, in work, and in life.

As you evaluate FY27 funding requests, we strongly and respectfully urge the Subcommittee to prioritize \$14.27 billion for Head Start. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



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Jahana Hayes  
Member of Congress



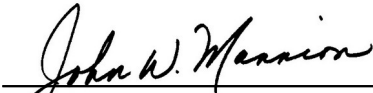
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Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



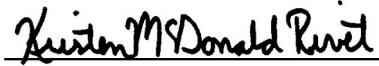
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Frederica S. Wilson  
Member of Congress



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John W. Mannion  
Member of Congress



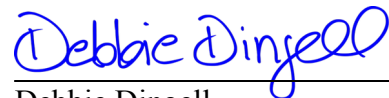
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Kristen McDonald Rivet  
Member of Congress



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Kim Schrier, M.D.  
Member of Congress



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Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress



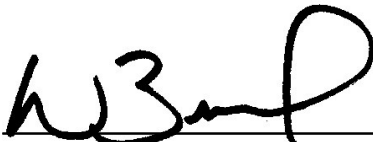
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Eleanor Holmes Norton  
Member of Congress



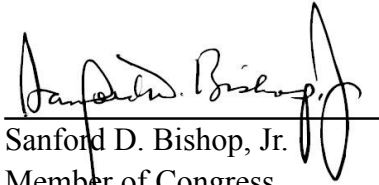
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Derek T. Tran  
Member of Congress



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Wesley Bell  
Member of Congress



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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
Member of Congress



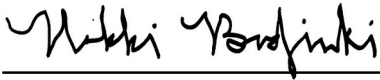
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Richard E. Neal  
Member of Congress



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Lateefah Simon  
Member of Congress




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Nikki Budzinski  
Member of Congress



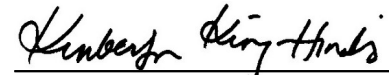
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Lori Trahan  
Member of Congress



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Suzan K. DelBene  
Member of Congress



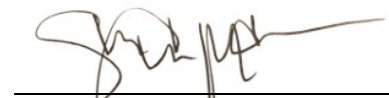
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Kimberlyn King-Hinds  
Member of Congress



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John Garamendi  
Member of Congress



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Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick  
Member of Congress



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Terri A. Sewell  
Member of Congress



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Josh Riley  
Member of Congress



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Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress



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James P. McGovern  
Member of Congress



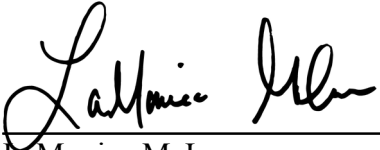
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Dwight Evans  
Member of Congress

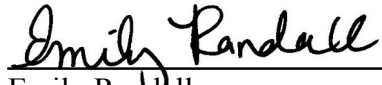


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Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



LaMonica McIver  
Member of Congress



Emily Randall  
Member of Congress



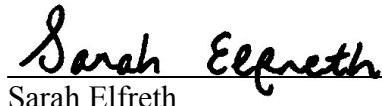
Jonathan L. Jackson  
Member of Congress



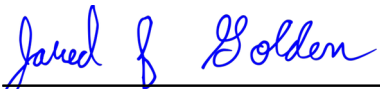
Nellie Pou  
Member of Congress




Joe Courtney  
Member of Congress



Sarah Elfreth  
Member of Congress



Jared Golden  
Member of Congress



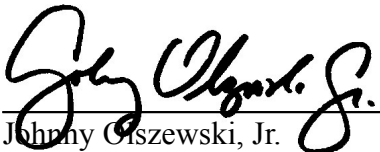
William R. Keating  
Member of Congress




Gwen S. Moore  
Member of Congress



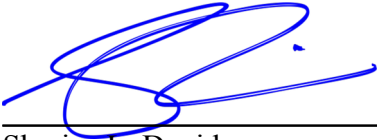
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



Johnny Oisewski, Jr.  
Member of Congress




Suzanne Bonamici  
Member of Congress



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Sharice L. Davids  
Member of Congress



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Angie Craig  
Member of Congress



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Brendan F. Boyle  
Member of Congress



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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



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Greg Casar  
Member of Congress



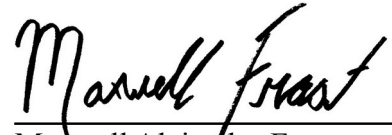
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Dan Goldman  
Member of Congress



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Marilyn Strickland  
Member of Congress



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Maxwell Alejandro Frost  
Member of Congress



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Jamie Raskin  
Member of Congress



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Seth Magaziner  
Member of Congress



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Rick Larsen  
Member of Congress



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John B. Larson  
Member of Congress

*Bill Foster*

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Bill Foster  
Member of Congress

*Jason Crow*

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Jason Crow  
Member of Congress

*Jimmy Gomez*

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Jimmy Gomez  
Member of Congress

*Frank Pallone, Jr.*

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Frank Pallone, Jr.  
Member of Congress

*Jan Schakowsky*

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Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

*Lucy McBath*

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Lucy McBath  
Member of Congress

*Kweisi Mfume*

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Kweisi Mfume  
Member of Congress

*Jennifer R. McClellan*

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Jennifer L. McClellan  
Member of Congress

*Josh Gottheimer*

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Josh Gottheimer  
Member of Congress

*J. Luis Correa*

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J. Luis Correa  
Member of Congress

*Salud Carbajal*

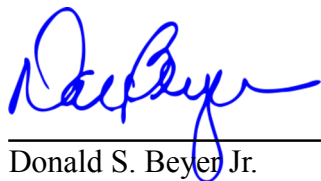
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Salud Carbajal  
Member of Congress

*Kathy Castor*

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Kathy Castor  
Member of Congress



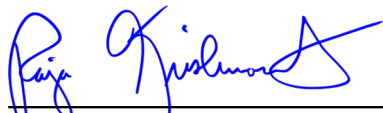
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Donald S. Beyer Jr.  
Member of Congress



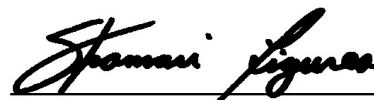
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Vicente Gonzalez  
Member of Congress



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Raja Krishnamoorthi  
Member of Congress



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Shomari Figures  
Member of Congress



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David Scott  
Member of Congress



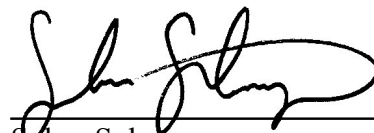
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Summer L. Lee  
Member of Congress



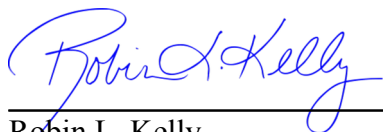
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Rashida Tlaib  
Member of Congress



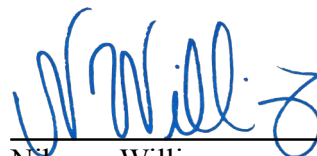
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Suhas Subramanyam  
Member of Congress



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Robin L. Kelly  
Member of Congress



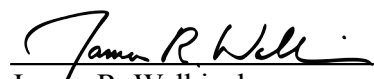
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Nikema Williams  
Member of Congress




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Lizzie Fletcher  
Member of Congress



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James R. Walkinshaw  
Member of Congress



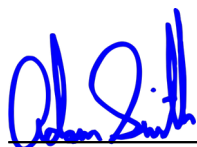
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Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



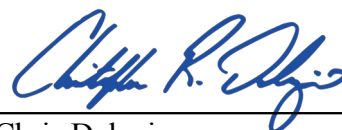
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Chellie Pingree  
Member of Congress



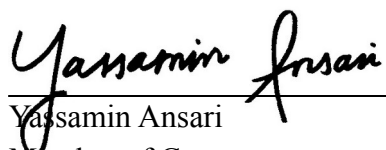
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Adam Smith  
Member of Congress



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Chris Deluzio  
Member of Congress



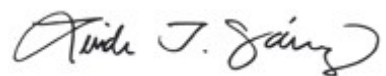
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Yassamin Ansari  
Member of Congress



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Doris Matsui  
Member of Congress



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Linda T. Sánchez  
Member of Congress



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Ayanna Pressley  
Member of Congress



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Herbert C. Conaway, Jr.  
Member of Congress



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



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Laura Friedman  
Member of Congress



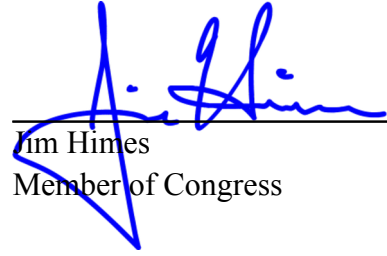
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Chrissy Houlahan  
Member of Congress



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Troy A. Carter, Sr.  
Member of Congress



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Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



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Maxine Waters  
Member of Congress



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Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez  
Member of Congress



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Val Hoyle  
Member of Congress



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Joaquin Castro  
Member of Congress



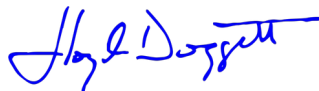
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Julia Brownley  
Member of Congress



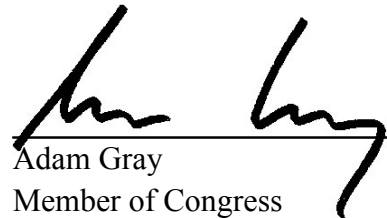
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Eric Swalwell  
Member of Congress



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Lloyd Doggett  
Member of Congress



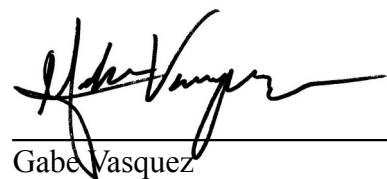
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Adam Gray  
Member of Congress



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Gabe Amo  
Member of Congress



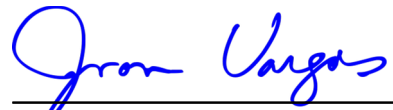
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Gabe Vasquez  
Member of Congress



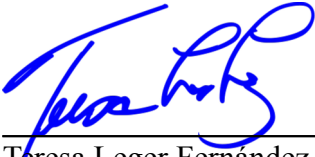
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Joyce Beatty  
Member of Congress



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Juan Vargas  
Member of Congress



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Teresa Leger Fernandez  
Member of Congress



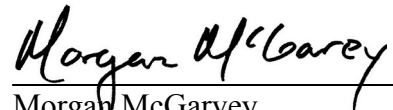
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Bradley Scott Schneider  
Member of Congress



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Eric Sorensen  
Member of Congress




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Morgan McGarvey  
Member of Congress



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Andrea Salinas  
Member of Congress



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Mark Takano  
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Stacey E. Plaskett  
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Mary Gay Scanlon  
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Raul Ruiz, M.D.  
Member of Congress



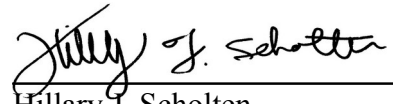
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George Whitesides  
Member of Congress



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Becca Balint  
Member of Congress



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Hillary J. Scholten  
Member of Congress



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Valerie P. Foushee  
Member of Congress



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Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.  
Member of Congress



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Emanuel Cleaver, II  
Member of Congress



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George Latimer  
Member of Congress



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Delia C. Ramirez  
Member of Congress



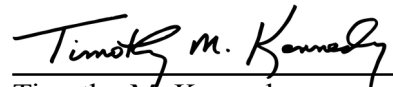
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Kevin Mullin  
Member of Congress



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SETH MOULTON  
Member of Congress



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Timothy M. Kennedy  
Member of Congress




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Julie Johnson  
Member of Congress



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Shontel M. Brown  
Member of Congress



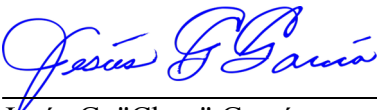
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Jake Auchincloss  
Member of Congress



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Gregory W. Meeks  
Member of Congress



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Jesús G. "Chuy" García  
Member of Congress



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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress



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Adelita S. Grijalva  
Member of Congress



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Greg Landsman  
Member of Congress



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Brad Sherman  
Member of Congress



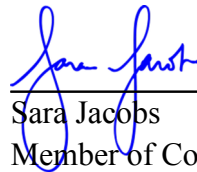
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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



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Greg Stanton  
Member of Congress



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Sara Jacobs  
Member of Congress



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Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress



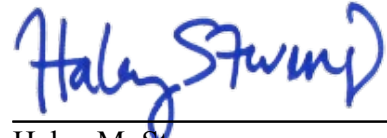
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Nanette Diaz Barragán  
Member of Congress



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Robert J. Menendez  
Member of Congress



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Haley M. Stevens  
Member of Congress



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Ritchie Torres  
Member of Congress



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Paul D. Tonko  
Member of Congress



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Patrick Ryan  
Member of Congress



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Thomas R. Suozzi  
Member of Congress



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Chris Pappas  
Member of Congress



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Jim Costa  
Member of Congress



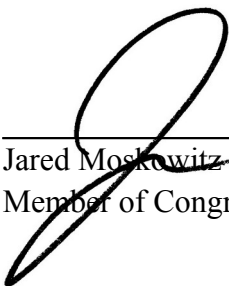
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Deborah K. Ross  
Member of Congress



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Jimmy Panetta  
Member of Congress



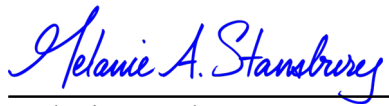
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Jared Moskowitz  
Member of Congress



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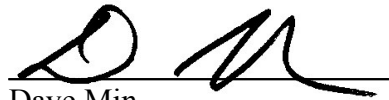
Ilhan Omar  
Member of Congress



Melanie Stansbury  
Member of Congress



Laura A. Gillen  
Member of Congress



Dave Min  
Member of Congress




JM Tokuda  
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia  
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters  
Member of Congress



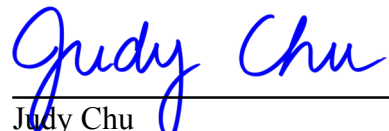
Eugene Simon Vindman  
Member of Congress



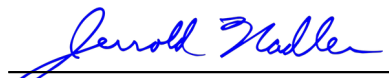
Al Green  
Member of Congress



Gilbert Ray Cisneros, Jr.  
Member of Congress



Judy Chu  
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler  
Member of Congress



Emilia Strong Sykes  
Member of Congress



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Jasmine Crockett  
Member of Congress



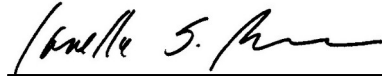
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Darren Soto  
Member of Congress



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Sydney Kamlager Dove  
Member of Congress



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Janelle S. Bynum  
Member of Congress




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Sylvia R. Garcia  
Member of Congress



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Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



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Sean Casten  
Member of Congress



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Donald G. Davis  
Member of Congress



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Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



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Maxine Dexter  
Member of Congress



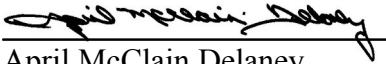
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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



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Zoe Lofgren  
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney  
Member of Congress



Maggie Goodlander  
Member of Congress



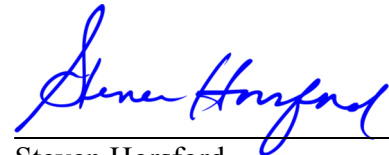
Pablo José Hernández  
Member of Congress



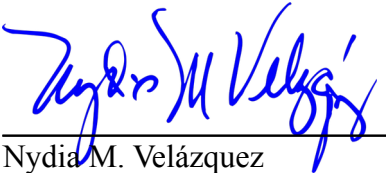
Ami Bera  
Member of Congress



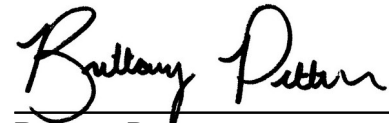
Steve Cohen  
Member of Congress



Steven Horsford  
Member of Congress



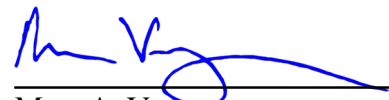
Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



Brittany Pettersen  
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



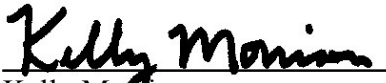
Marc A. Veasey  
Member of Congress



Luz M. Rivas  
Member of Congress



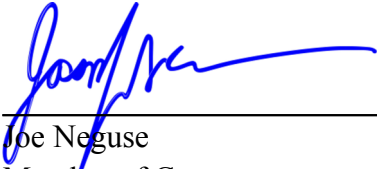
Sarah McBride  
Member of Congress



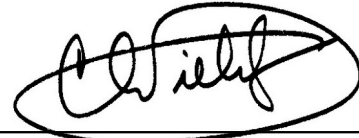
Kelly Morrison  
Member of Congress



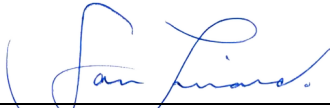
Shri Thanedar  
Member of Congress



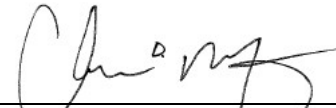
Joe Neguse  
Member of Congress



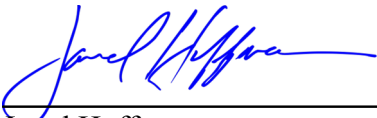
Cleo Fields  
Member of Congress



Sam T. Liccardo  
Member of Congress



Christian D. Menefee  
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman  
Member of Congress



Glenn F. Ivey  
Member of Congress