

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

November 17, 2017

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen and Ranking Member Lowey:

CC: Speaker Ryan and Leader Pelosi:

As Congress debates the Fiscal Year 2018 funding mechanism, we urge you to oppose any riders that could politicize charitable nonprofit and philanthropic organizations.

In the 115th Congress, there has not been a single congressional hearing or committee policy discussion to examine the impact of amending or eliminating the current federal tax provisions that prohibit tax-exempt organizations described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code from endorsing, opposing, or contributing to political candidates. This longstanding protection, better known as the Johnson Amendment, has served as an important legal precedent separating charitable organizations from electoral politics. It is a dangerous precedent to bypass House rules and standards by addressing this issue in appropriations legislation.

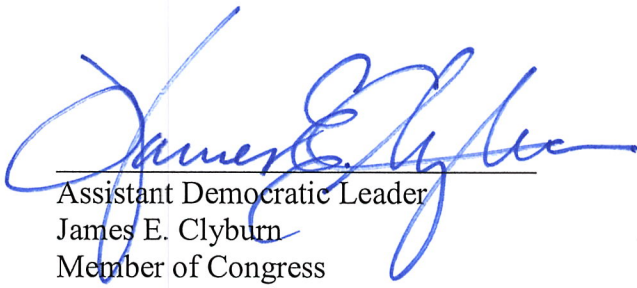
Since 1954, the Johnson Amendment has ensured that tax-exempt organizations, including charitable nonprofits, houses of worship, and foundations do not endorse or oppose political candidates. It protects the right of these organizations to discuss political and social issues while, at the same time, ensuring they are not pressured by political candidates, campaigns, and donors to take a side in divisive partisan elections.

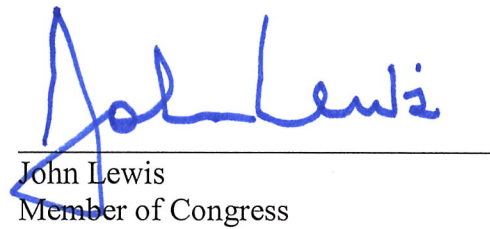
As you know, preserving the Johnson Amendment is widely supported by religious organizations and denominations, faith leaders, secular nonprofits, and the overwhelming majority of Americans. Since August 2017, more than 4,200 faith leaders have sent letters to all Members of Congress strongly opposing any efforts to weaken or repeal the Johnson Amendment. Similarly, in September, more than 5,500 organizations from all 50 states wrote each of us expressing opposition to any changes to the Johnson Amendment.

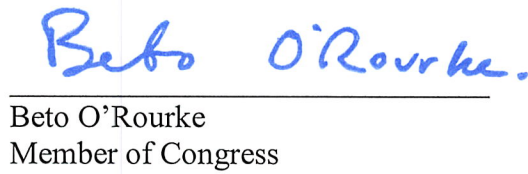
For decades, this policy has shielded our nation's charitable community against the rancor of partisan politics and allowed them to freely address humanitarian, social, and community-specific problems in a nonpartisan manner. Simply said, Americans do not want houses of worship, charitable nonprofits, and foundations to become points of leverage for partisan politics. Nor do they want tax-exempt, charitable contributions to be funneled into political campaigns.

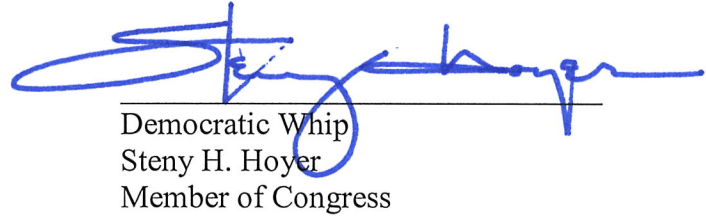
As always, we appreciate your consideration of our views on this grave matter, and we respectfully request that you ensure any end-of-the-year budget deal retain the Johnson Amendment without modification.

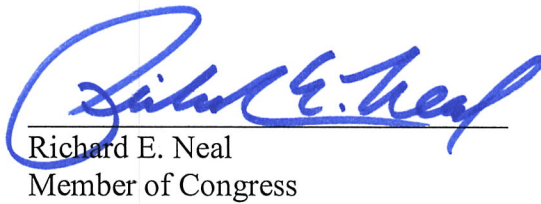
Sincerely,

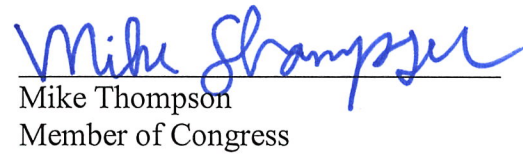

Assistant Democratic Leader
James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress


John Lewis
Member of Congress

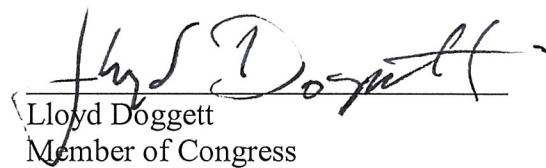

Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress

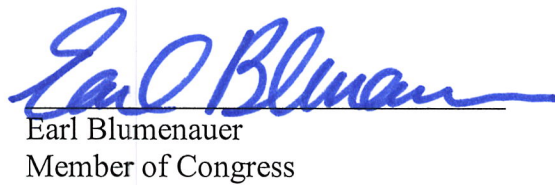

Democratic Whip
Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress

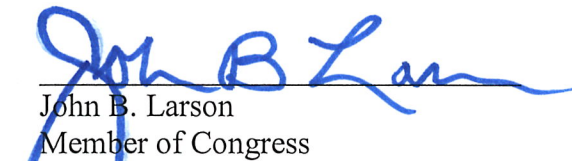

Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress

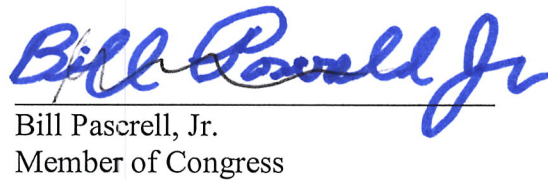

Mike Thompson
Member of Congress

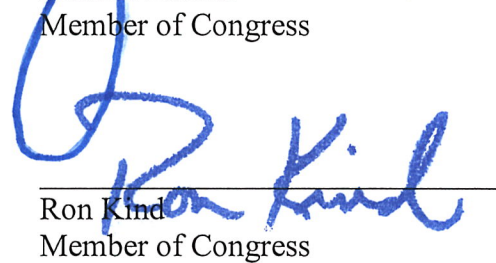

Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress

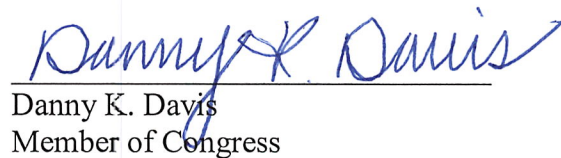

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

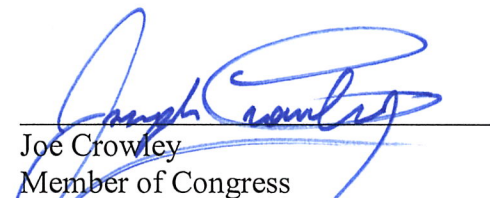

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

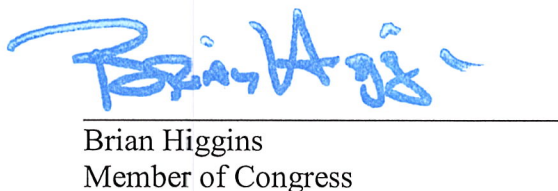

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

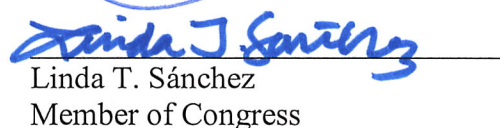

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress


Ron Kind
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress

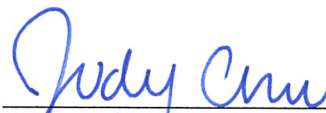

Joe Crowley
Member of Congress


Brian Higgins
Member of Congress

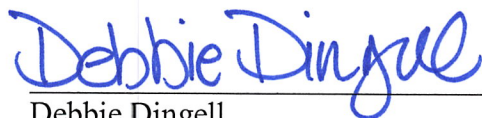

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



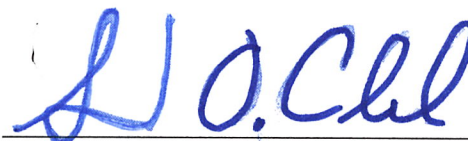
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



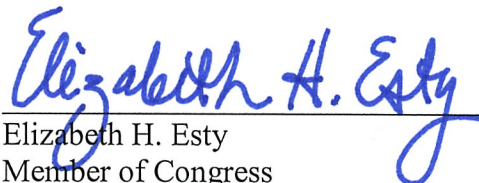
Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



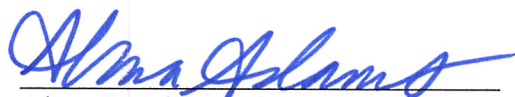
Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



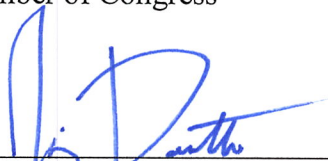
Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



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



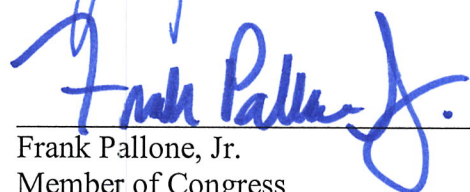
Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress




Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



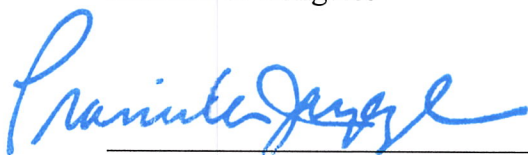
Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



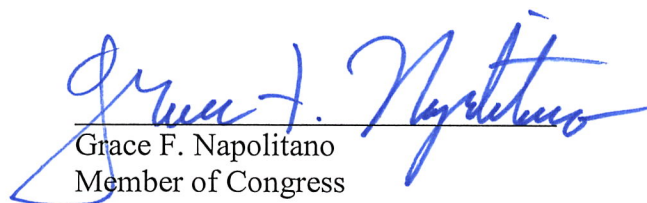
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



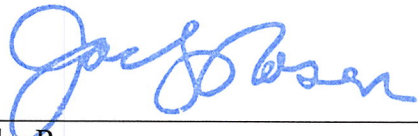
A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



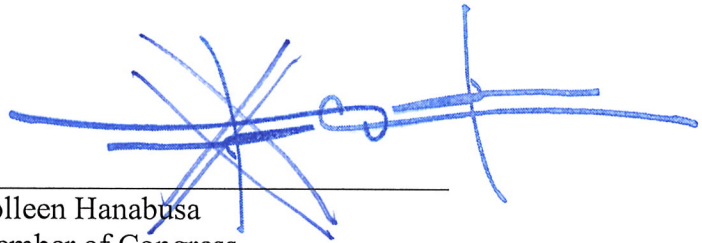
Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



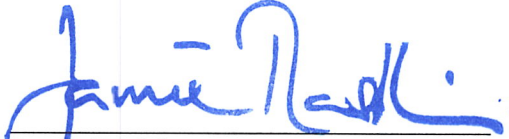
Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



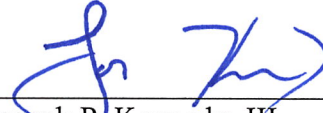
Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress



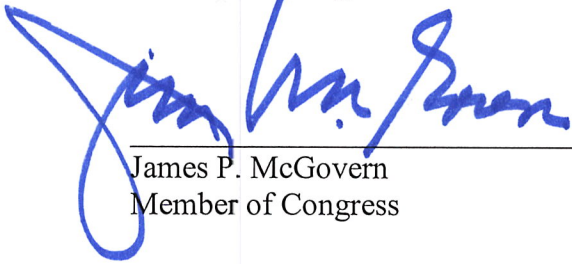
Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



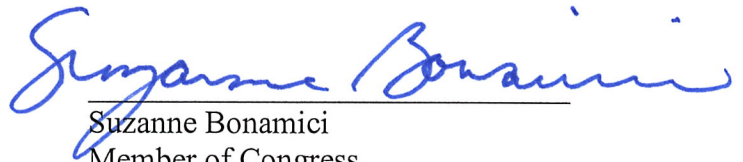
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



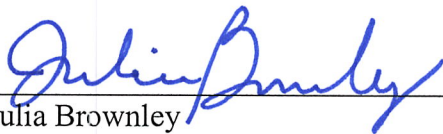
Joseph P. Kennedy, III
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



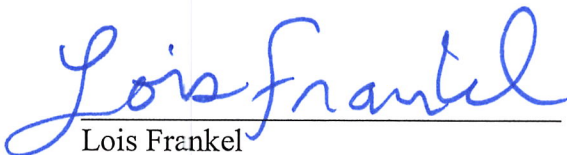
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



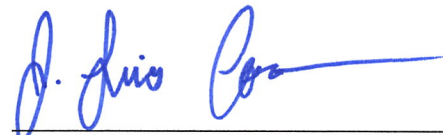
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



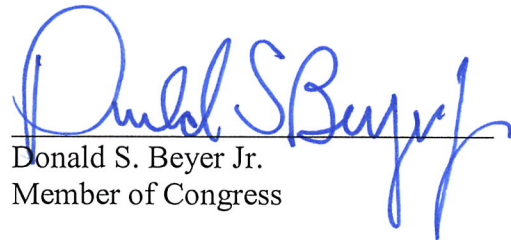
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



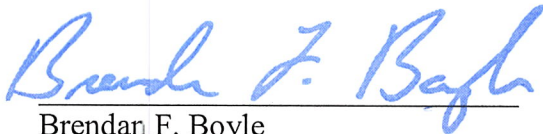
J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



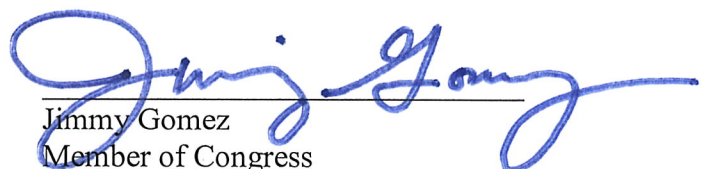
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



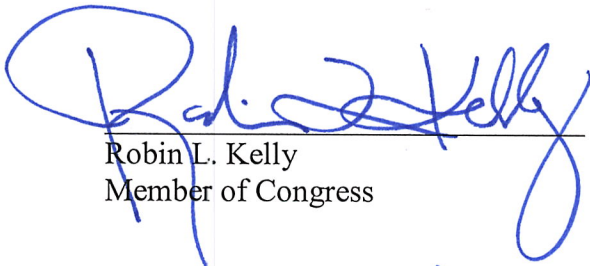
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



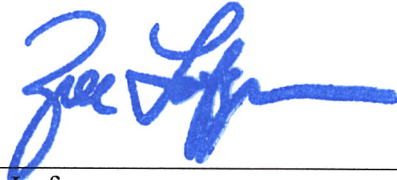
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



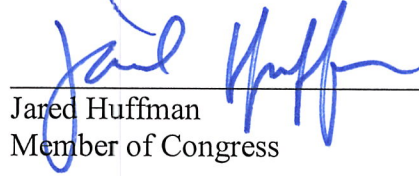
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



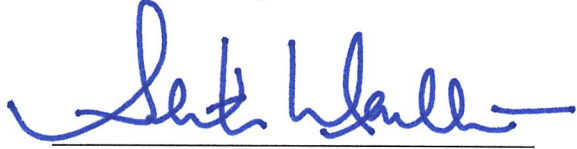
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



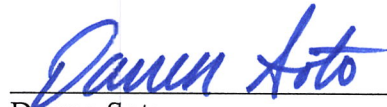
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



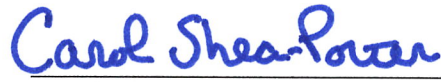
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



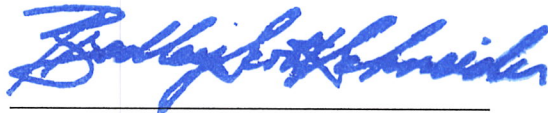
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Darren Soto
Member of Congress



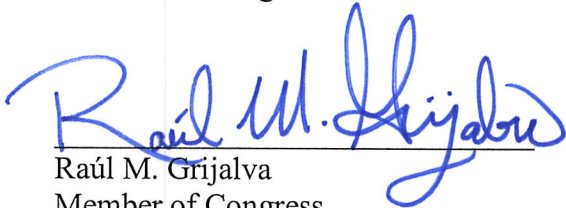
Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



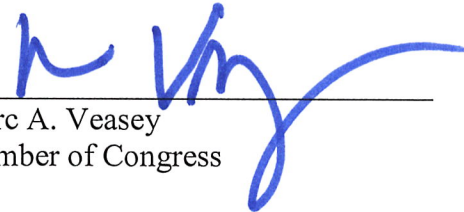
Bradley S. Schneider
Member of Congress



Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress



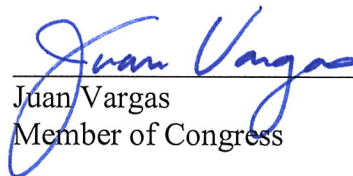
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



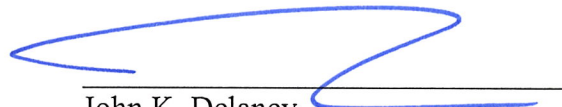
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



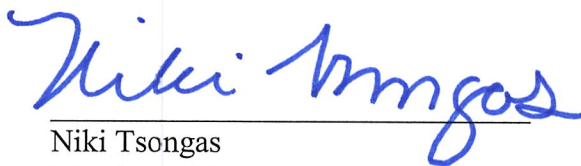
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



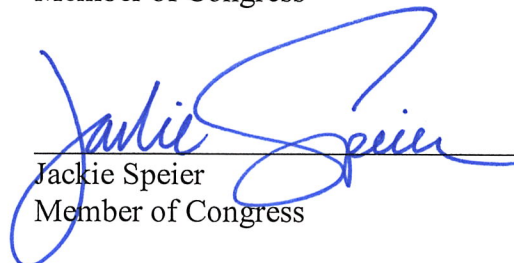
Adriano Espaillat
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Terri Sewell

Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress

Carolyn B. Maloney

Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress

Doris Matsui

Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Albio Sires

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Daniel Lipinski

Daniel W. Lipinski
Member of Congress

Alcee L. Hastings

Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress

Jan Schakowsky

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Steve Cohen

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress

Luis V. Guterrez

Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

John Garamendi

John Garamendi
Member of Congress

Lucille Roybal-Allard

Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch

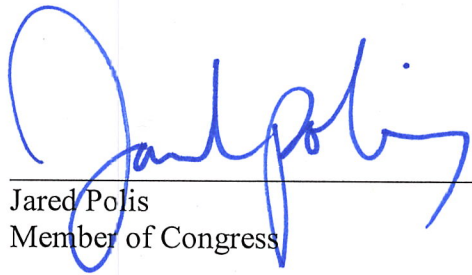
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress

Dina Titus

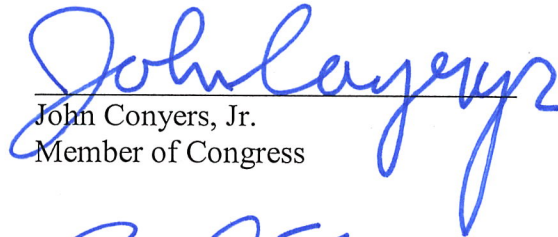
Dina Titus
Member of Congress

Al Lawson

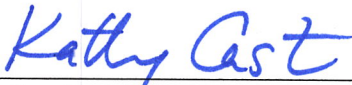
Al Lawson
Member of Congress



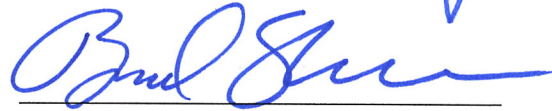
Jared Polis
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



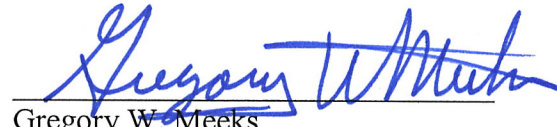
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



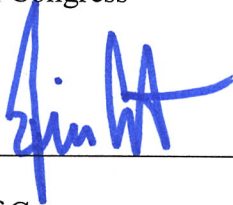
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



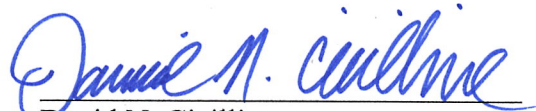
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



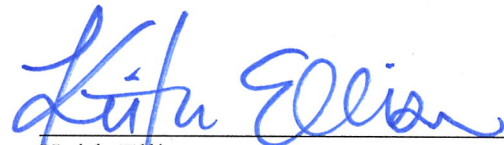
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



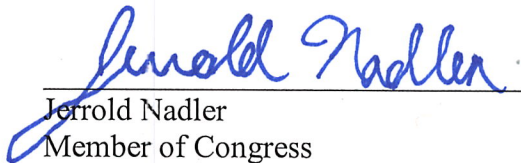
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress




David E. Price
Member of Congress



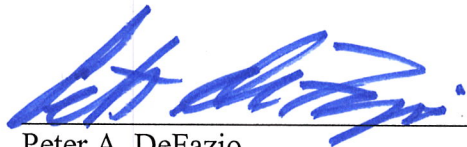
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



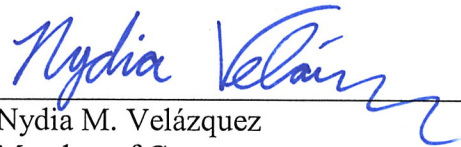
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



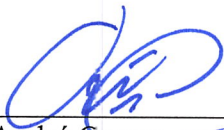
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



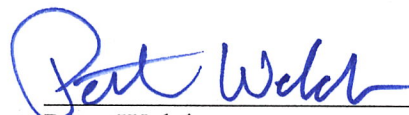
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



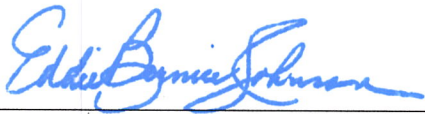
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



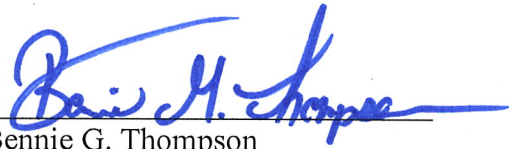
André Carson
Member of Congress



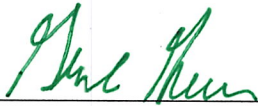
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



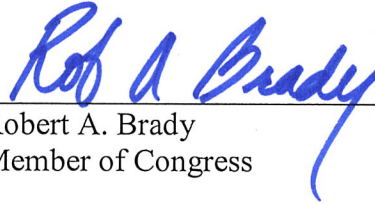
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



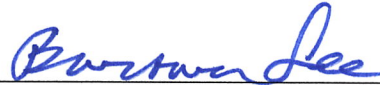
Gene Green
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



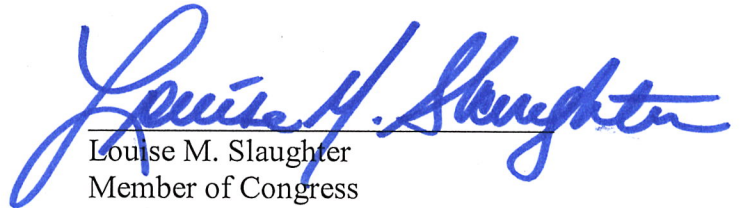
Ami Bera
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress