

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 29, 2016

The Honorable John Kerry
United States Secretary of State
Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Secretary Kerry,

We write to urge the State Department to immediately and unreservedly exercise its leadership to ensure that the United Nations (UN) take concrete steps to eliminate the cholera epidemic introduced to Haiti in 2010 by waste from a UN peacekeeper camp, and to comply with its legal and moral obligations to provide cholera victims with access to an effective remedy.

A recently revealed internal UN report confirms that the Haiti mission, known as MINUSTAH, was discharging untreated waste into Haiti's environment from several peacekeeping bases, and continued this unacceptable practice after the cholera outbreak. The official cumulative death toll since 2010 — nearly 10,000—makes Haiti's epidemic the worst cholera epidemic of modern times, but recent scientific studies suggest that the true death toll may be three to ten times higher. Since we last wrote to Secretary-General Ban Ki Moon in December 2014 urging action, the epidemic's damage to the people of Haiti and to the UN's credibility has become more catastrophic, while the UN's response to the emergency has dwindled. Cholera increased in the first three months of 2016 compared to the previous year.

While the deaths, illness, and evidence of malfeasance mounted, UN Assistant Secretary-General Pedro Medrano Rojas, who met with Congress as the UN's point person for responding to the epidemic, left office in June 2015 and was not replaced. The UN continues to refuse to even discuss providing compensation for the losses incurred by those killed and sickened by the cholera it brought to Haiti, and there is no notable progress in its proclaimed efforts to provide the water and sanitation infrastructure necessary to control the cholera epidemic.

In calling for a more effective response to the UN cholera epidemic, we are joining the weight of world opinion, both inside and outside the UN. Five of the UN's own human rights experts—four UN Special Rapporteurs and the UN's Independent Expert on Human Rights in Haiti—wrote to the UN Secretary-General in October 2015 that “it is essential that the victims of cholera have access to a transparent, independent and impartial mechanism that can review their claims and decide on the merits of those claims in order to ensure adequate reparation...” Amnesty International has stressed that “the legacy of the UN in Haiti, and particularly of MINUSTAH, will be greatly determined by the way the United Nations responds to this very important situation.”

In July 2015, 154 Haitian-American groups and leaders from across the United States asked you to ensure that the United States' support for UN immunity in U.S. courts did not result in

impunity for the UN's damage in Haiti. At a recent hearing in the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit, the panel of judges questioned why the State Department had not used its diplomatic powers to press for a more just UN response. A judge asked the U.S. Attorney to concede that the result of leaving the victims without a remedy would be "very, very bad."

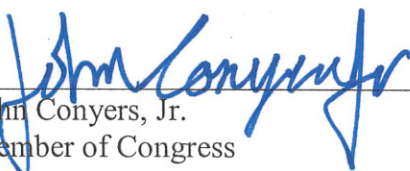
While we do not wish to take a position in the litigation, we are deeply concerned that the State Department's failure to take more leadership in the diplomatic realm might be perceived by our constituents and the world as a limited commitment to an accountable and credible UN. As the Boston Globe Editorial Board recently wrote, Congress and the Department of State "have a moral duty to lead the way, not follow — outside the courtroom walls."

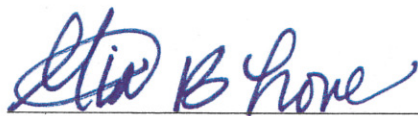
Each day that passes without an appropriate UN response is a tragedy for Haitian cholera victims, and a stain on the UN's reputation. As the Special Rapporteurs stated, "the denial of the fundamental right of the victims of cholera to justice and to an effective remedy is difficult to reconcile with the United Nations' commitment to 'promote and encourage respect for human rights.'" We are especially concerned that the UN's refusal to comply with its legal responsibility for cholera deeply undermines the organizations' rule of law and democracy-building work throughout the world that American taxpayers support so generously.

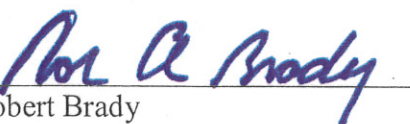
Mr. Secretary, we respectfully urge the Department of State to treat the issue of a just and accountable UN response to Haiti's cholera with the urgency that 10,000-100,000 deaths and catastrophic damage to the UN's credibility deserves. A just resolution is imperative to protecting the human rights of victims, and to preserving the UN's role as a champion for human rights.


Your leadership in this noble and urgent endeavor is much appreciated.

Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress


Mia Love
Member of Congress



Robert Brady
Member of Congress

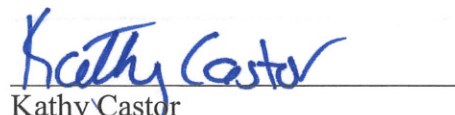

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress


James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

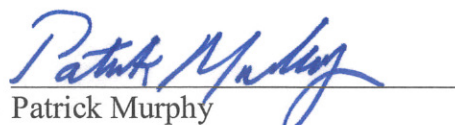

Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress

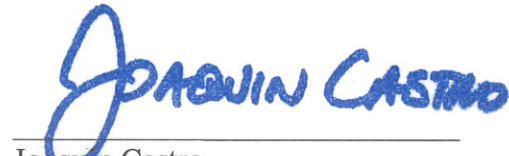

Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Michael McCaul
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress


Patrick Murphy
Member of Congress


Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress


Alma Adams
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress

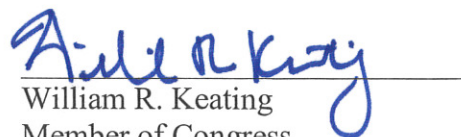

Dan Kildee
Member of Congress


Frank Pallone
Member of Congress


Cedric Richmond
Member of Congress

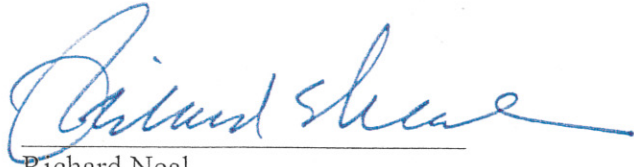

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress


Mark Pocan
Member of Congress

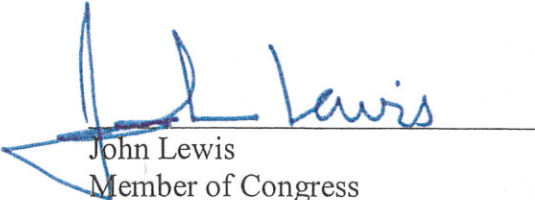

William R. Keating
Member of Congress




Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Richard Neal
Member of Congress



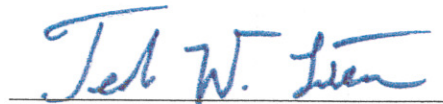
John Lewis
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



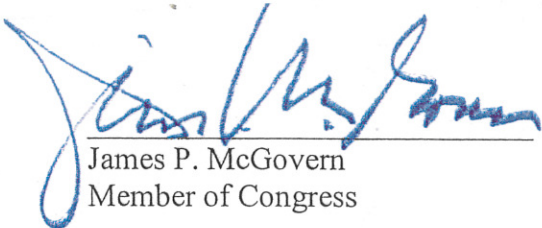
Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



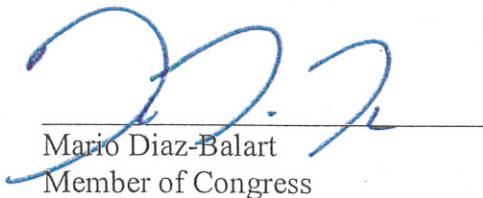
Donald S. Beyer
Member of Congress



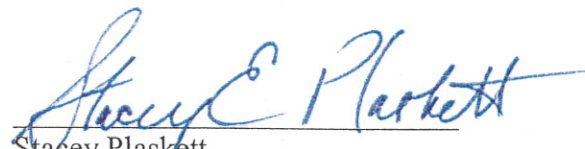
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



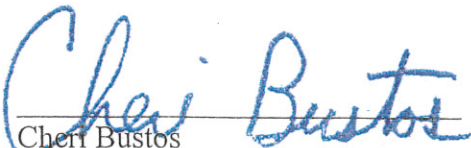
Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Mario Diaz-Balart
Member of Congress



Stacey Plaskett
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



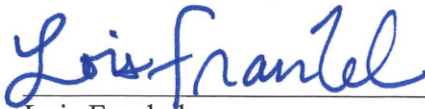
Marcia Fudge
Member of Congress



Tim Walz
Member of Congress



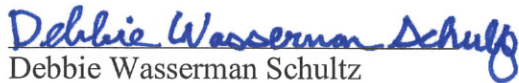
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



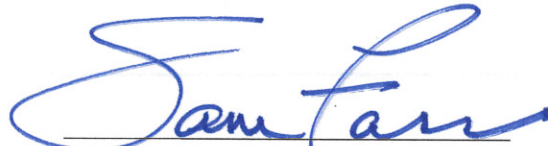
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



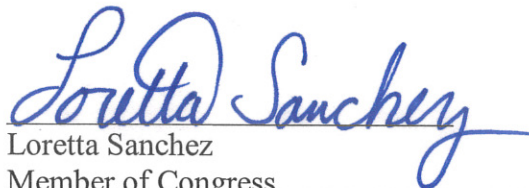
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



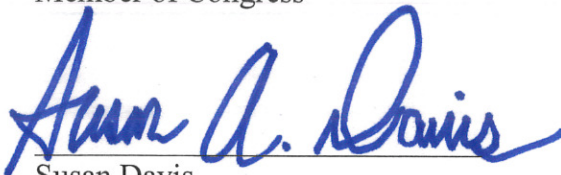
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



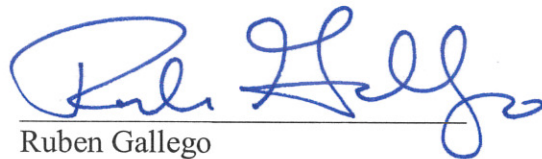
Terri Sewell
Member of Congress



Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



Susan Davis
Member of Congress



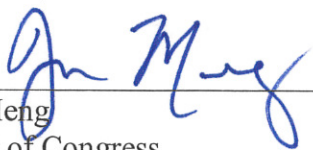
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



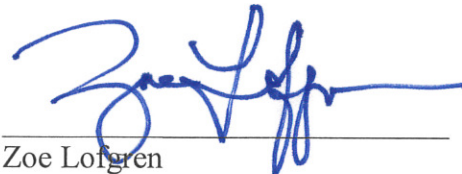
Brenda Lawrence
Member of Congress



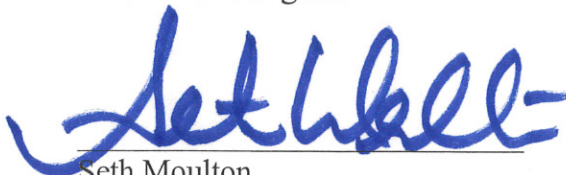
Robin Kelly
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



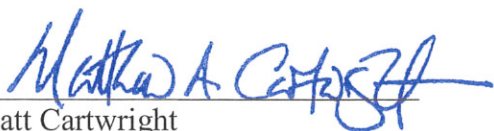
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



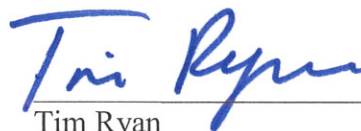
Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



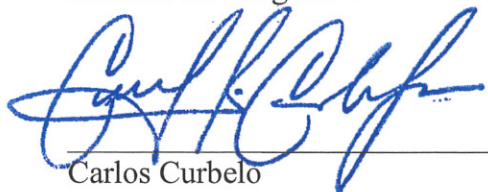
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress



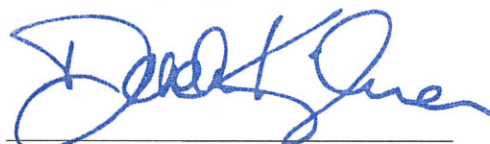
Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress



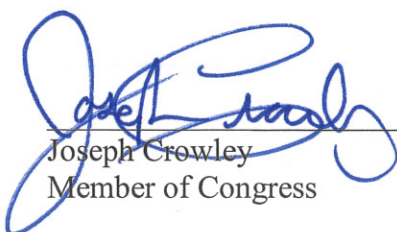
Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



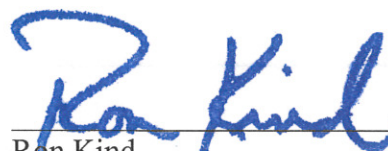
Carlos Curbelo
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



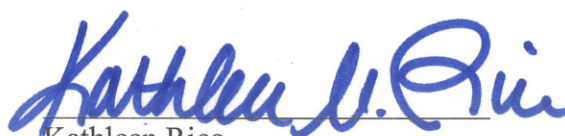
Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



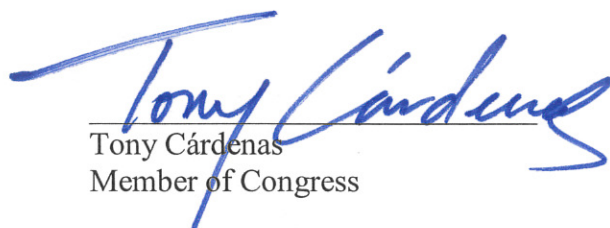
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



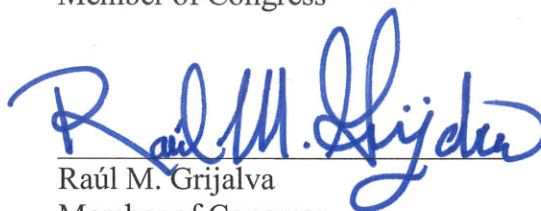
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Kathleen Rice
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



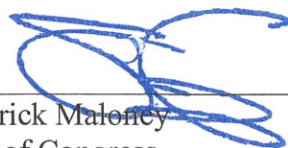
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



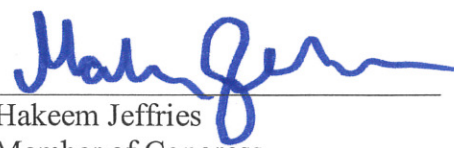
Lee Zeldin
Member of Congress



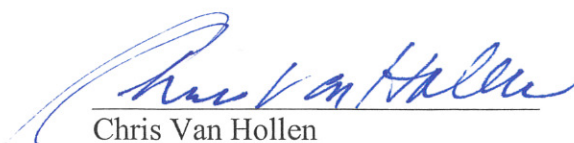
Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



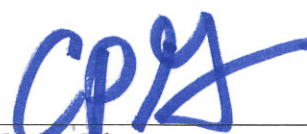
Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress



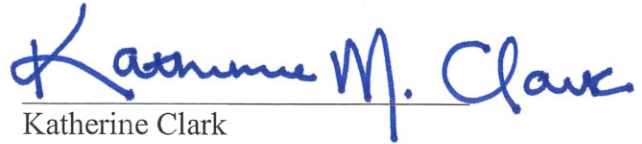
Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



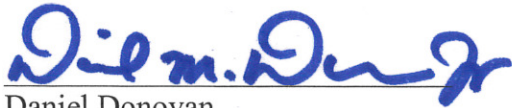
Chris Gibson
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



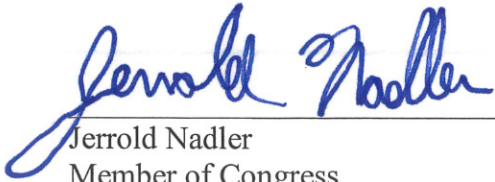
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Daniel Donovan
Member of Congress



David E. Price
Member of Congress



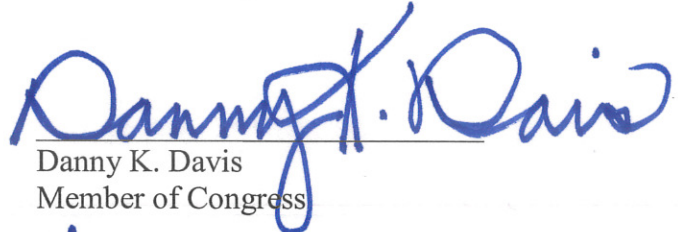
Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



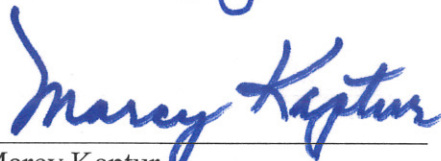
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



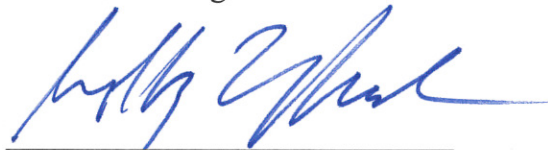
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



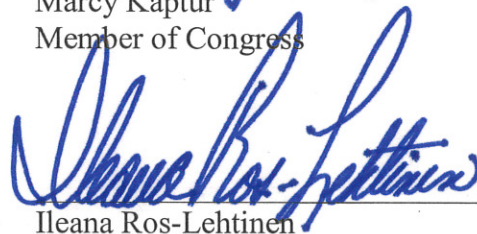
Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



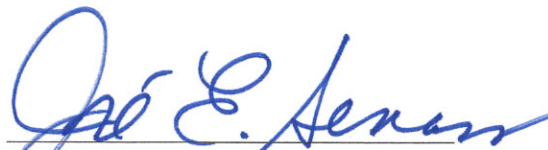
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



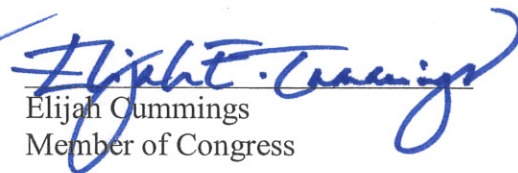
Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



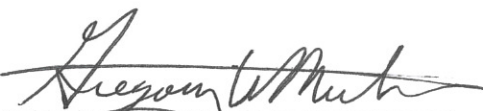
Ileana Ros-Lehtinen
Member of Congress



Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress



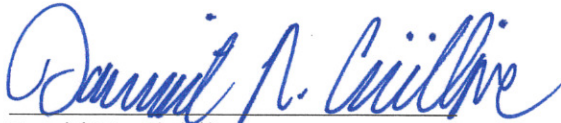
Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



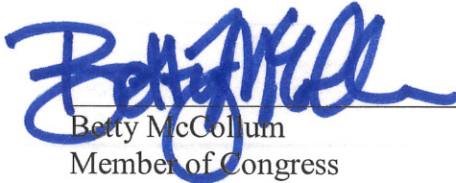
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



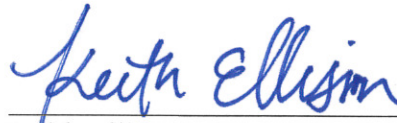
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



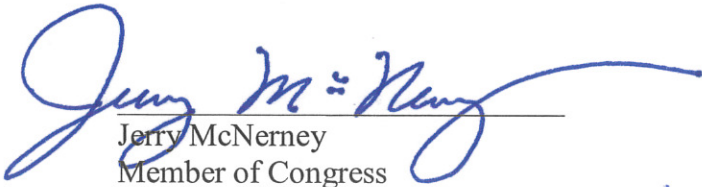
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



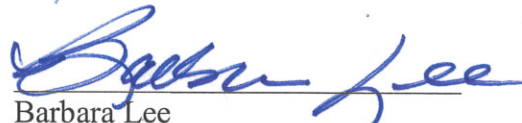
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



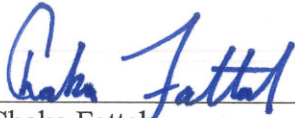
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



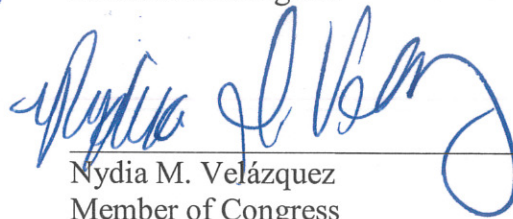
Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



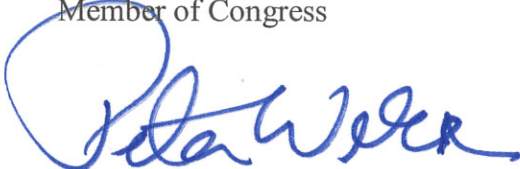
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress




Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



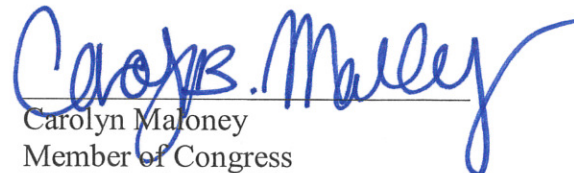
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



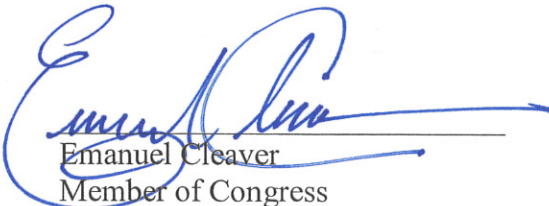
G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress




Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress




Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

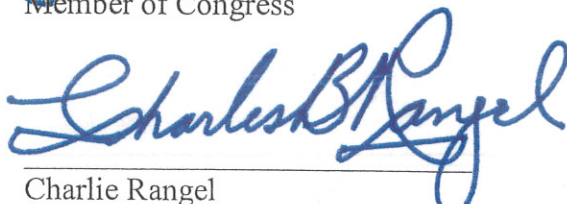


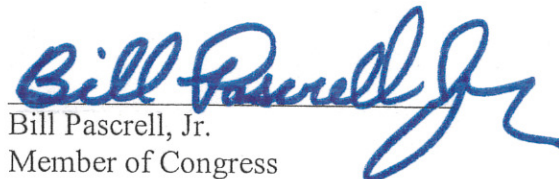
Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Albro Sires
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress

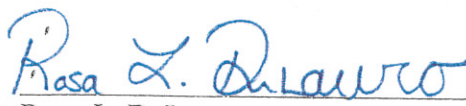

Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Charlie Rangel
Member of Congress

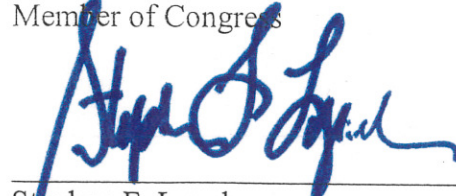

Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress

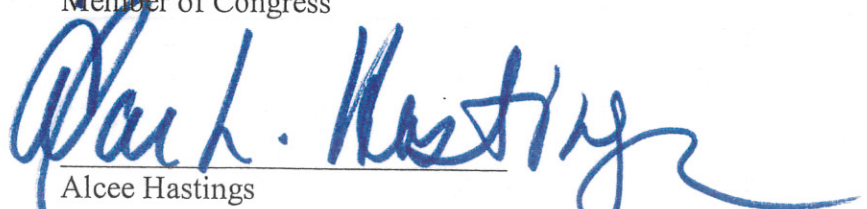

Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress



Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress

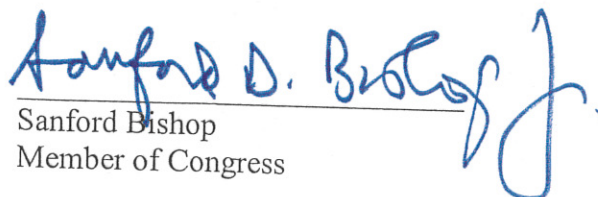

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress

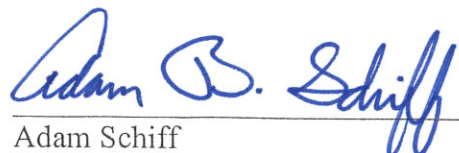

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress

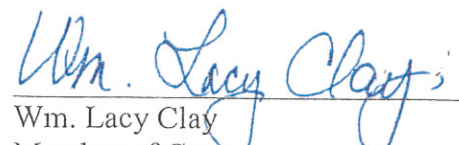

Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress

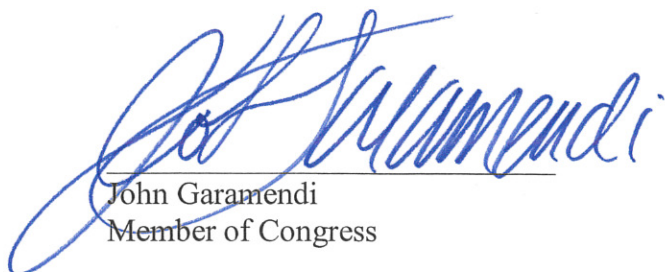

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Chris Smith
Member of Congress

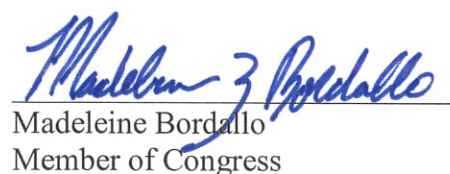

Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress


Adam Schiff
Member of Congress

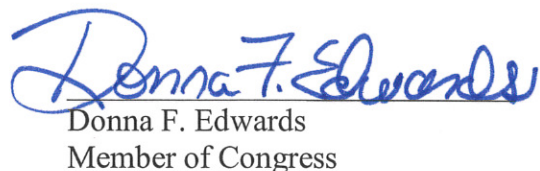

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



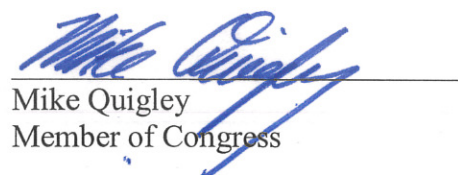
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



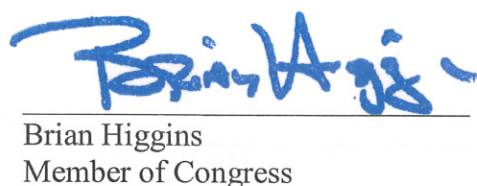
André Carson
Member of Congress



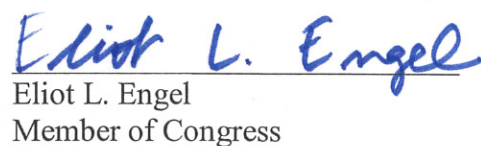
Steve Israel
Member of Congress



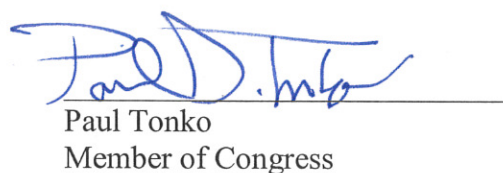
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



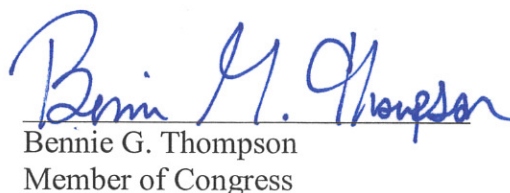
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



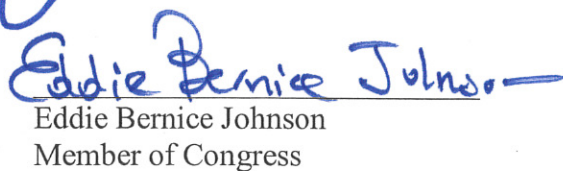
Paul Tonko
Member of Congress



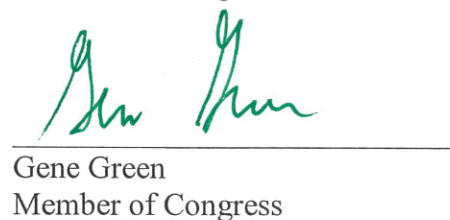
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



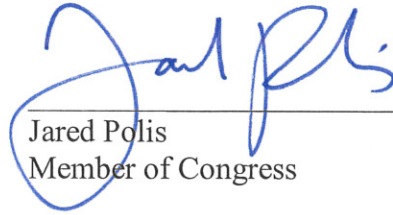
Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Gene Green
Member of Congress



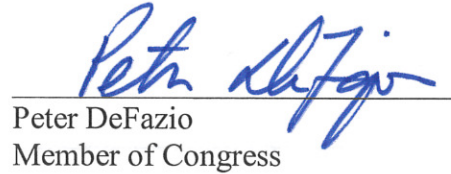
C. A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



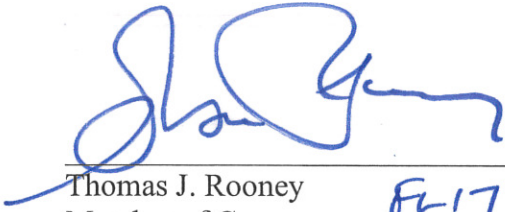
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



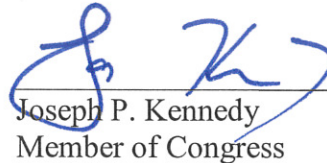
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



Gus M. Bilirakis
Member of Congress



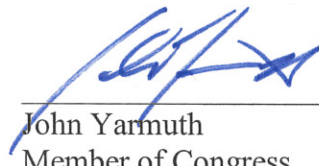
Thomas J. Rooney
Member of Congress



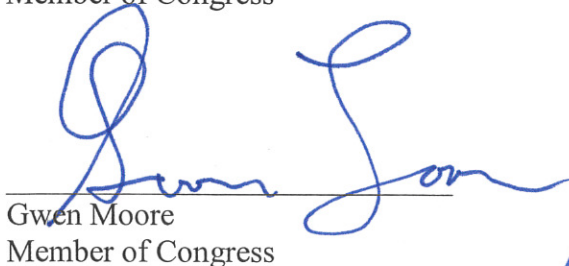
Joseph P. Kennedy
Member of Congress



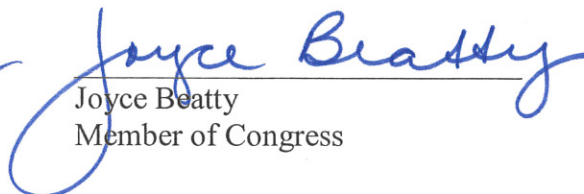
Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress



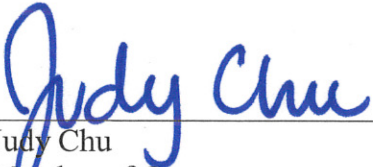
John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



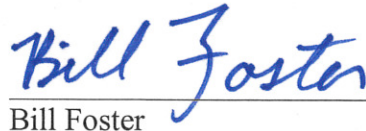
Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



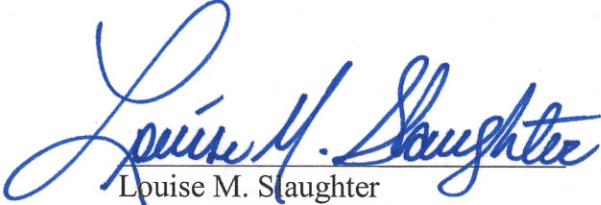
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Louise M. Slaughter
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



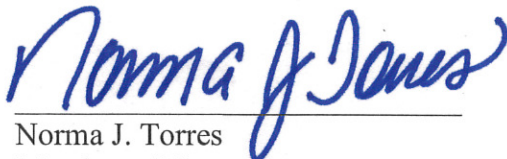
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



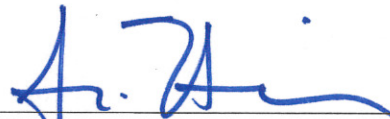
Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



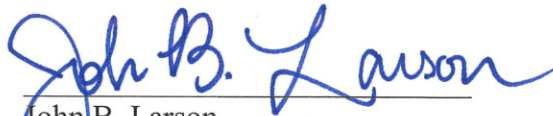
Steve Chabot
Member of Congress



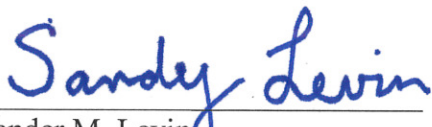
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress




Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress




John B. Larson
Member of Congress



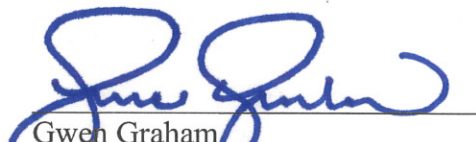
Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



Gwen Graham
Member of Congress



Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress