

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

April 18, 2016

The Honorable Andy Slavitt  
Acting Administrator  
Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
7500 Security Boulevard  
Baltimore, MD 21244

Dear Acting Administrator Slavitt:

We are writing to express some concerns with the hospital star rating system that CMS plans to publicly release in April 2016. While we strongly support public reporting of provider quality data, we urge you to ensure that this data adequately accounts for hospital patient mixes that include higher proportions of patients with multiple complex chronic health conditions and lower socioeconomic status. We also request that you provide hospitals with more details on the methodology used to determine their star ratings.

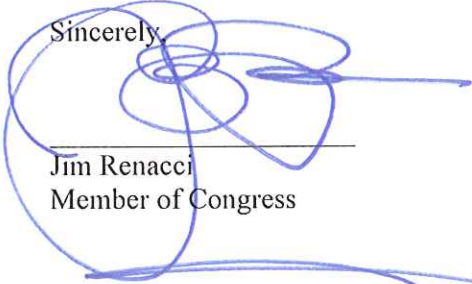
We want to make sure that the star rating system is not misleading to consumers because of flaws in the measures that underpin the ratings. As you know, many prominent hospitals that are in the top echelon of other quality rating reports, and handle the most complex procedures and patients, will receive one or two stars (out of a possible five), indicating that they have the poorest quality in comparison to other hospitals.

We are concerned that the hospital star ratings, in their current form, may be unfairly masking quality or, possibly, over-weighting of patient experience measures and will therefore not help consumers make well-informed decisions about which hospitals to use. A number of the quality measures that underpin the ratings unfairly impact teaching hospitals that treat low socioeconomic status patients, more complex patients, and perform a greater number of complicated surgeries. MedPAC, the National Quality Forum, and other researchers have underscored the importance of appropriately adjusting for socioeconomic status and patient complexity; and CMS has recognized the need for this adjustment in the Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D programs. We also encourage CMS to incorporate the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation's forthcoming findings on the impact of socioeconomic status on quality measures into future star ratings.

Additionally, we are concerned that CMS has provided insufficient details regarding the methodology used to determine these star ratings and has not provided hospitals with the data used to derive the ratings. We have heard from hospitals in our districts that they do not have the necessary data to replicate or evaluate CMS's work to ensure that the methodology is accurate or fair. We believe that additional time is necessary for hospitals and stakeholders to thoroughly review the data and understand the impact of the current methodology to ensure the validity and accuracy of the information before it is publicly released. We respectfully request that you delay release of the star ratings to provide the necessary time to more closely examine the star rating methodology, analyze its impact on different types of hospitals, and provide more transparent information regarding the calculation of the ratings to determine accuracy.

We want to work together to ensure that hospitals are not penalized for treating the most vulnerable or complex patients in the star ratings system, the Hospital Readmissions Reduction Program, or any other quality program. We urge CMS to work with Congress and the hospital community to resolve these concerns. Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



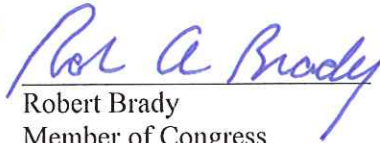
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Robert Brady  
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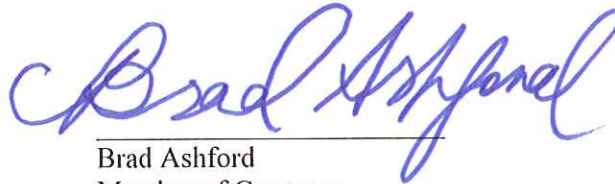
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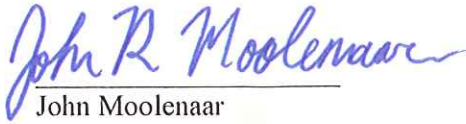


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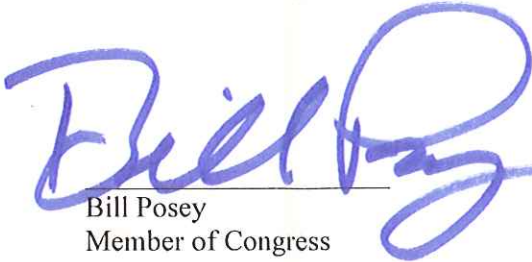




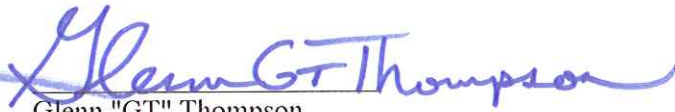
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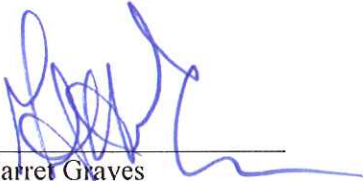
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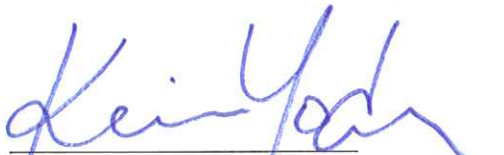
Garret Graves  
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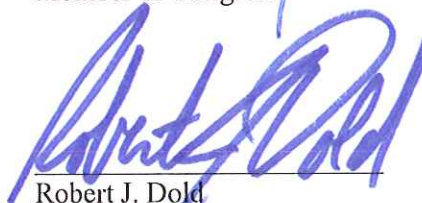
Michelle Lujan Grisham  
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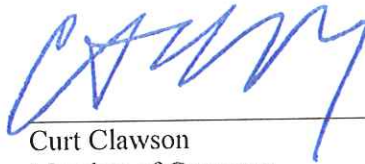
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Member of Congress



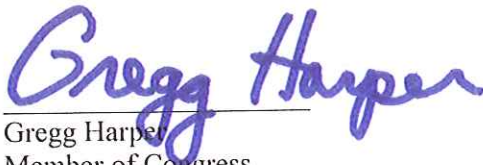
David Scott  
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Dan Kildee  
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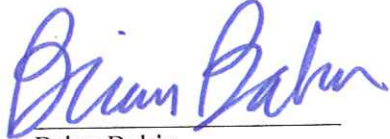
Curt Clawson  
Member of Congress



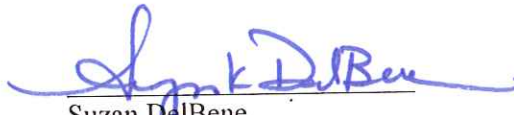
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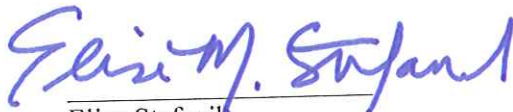
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*Tom MacArthur*


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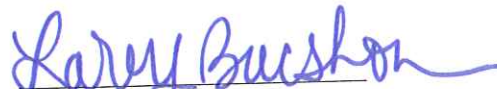
  
George Holding  
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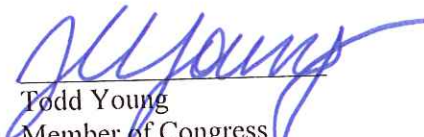
  
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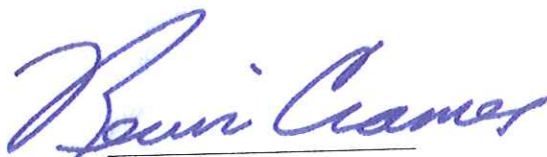
  
Larry Bucshon, M.D.  
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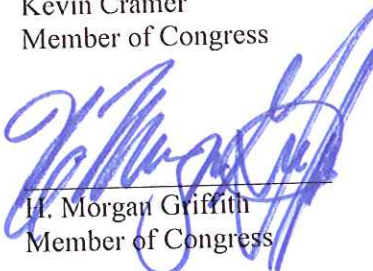
  
Cheri Bustos  
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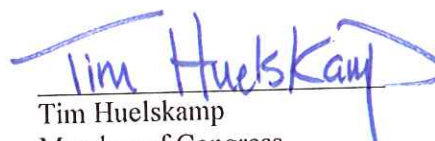
  
Blake Farenthold  
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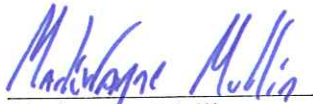
  
Martha McSally  
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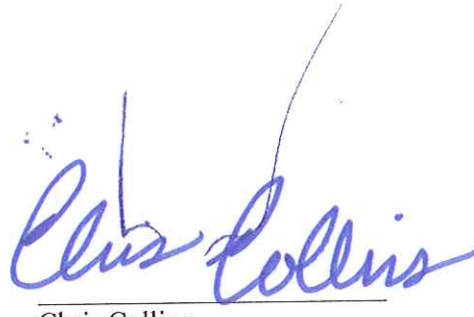
  
Kevin Cramer  
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H. Morgan Griffith  
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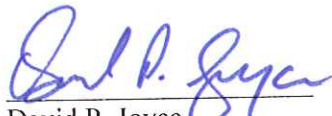
  
Chris Collins  
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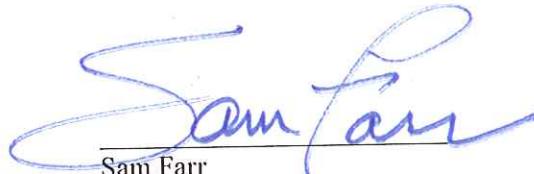
  
Jason Smith  
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Steve Womack  
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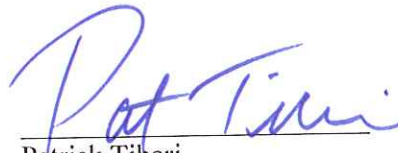
  
David P. Joyce  
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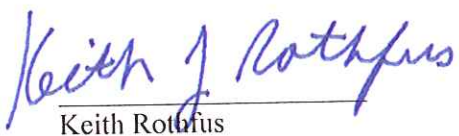
  
Sam Farr  
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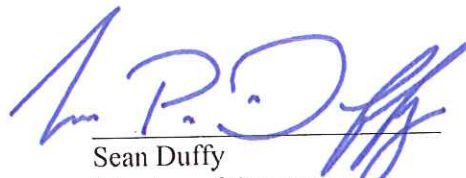
  
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Diane Black  
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Terri Sewell  
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Patrick Tiberi  
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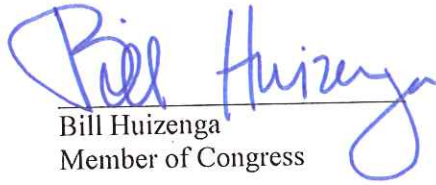
  
Keith Rothfus  
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Sean Duffy  
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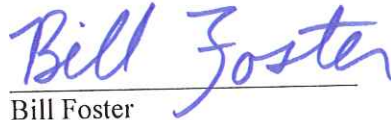
Renee Ellmers  
Member of Congress



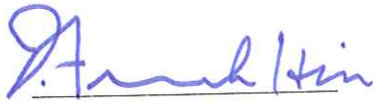
Bill Huizenga  
Member of Congress



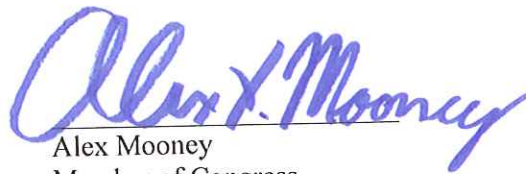
Adam Kinzinger  
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Bill Foster  
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French Hill  
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Alex Mooney  
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Brenda Lawrence  
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Brad Wenstrup  
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Beto O'Rourke  
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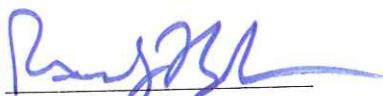
Trey Gowdy  
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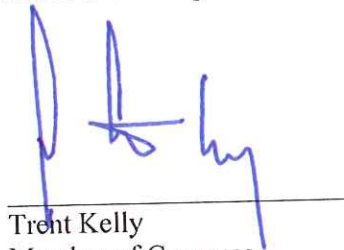
Seth Moulton  
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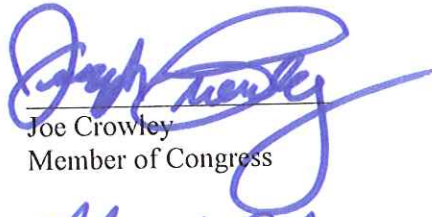
Tim Ryan  
Member of Congress



Randy Neugebauer  
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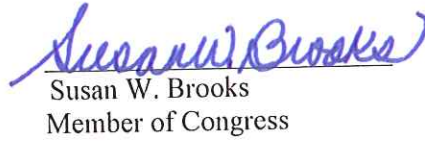


Trent Kelly  
Member of Congress



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Joe Crowley  
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Susan W. Brooks  
Member of Congress



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Mark Takano  
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Kathleen Rice  
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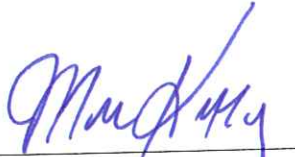
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Jody Hice  
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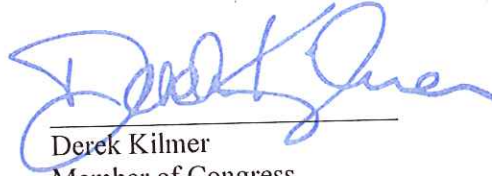
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Lee Zeldin  
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Mike Kelly  
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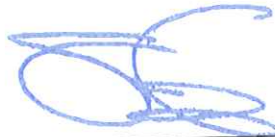
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Derek Kilmer  
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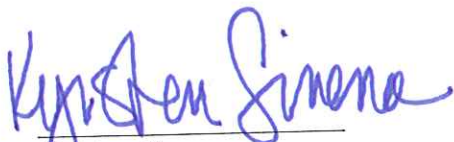
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Sean Patrick Maloney  
Member of Congress



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Kyrsten Sinema  
Member of Congress




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Donald Norcross  
Member of Congress



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Andy Harris, M.D.  
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Billy Long  
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Member of Congress

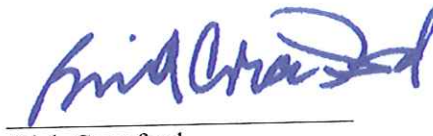
  
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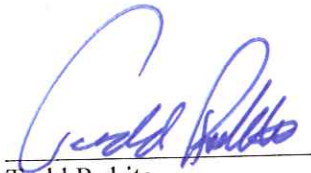
  
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Chris Van Hollen  
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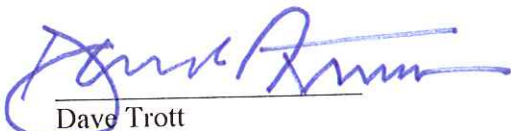
  
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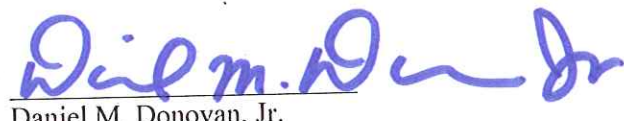
  
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Bobby Rush  
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Collin Peterson  
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Steve King

Steve King  
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Charles W Dent

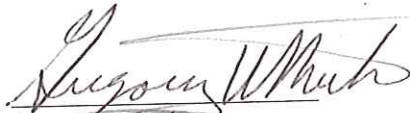
Charles W. Dent  
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Joe Wilson


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Member of Congress

Elijah Cummings

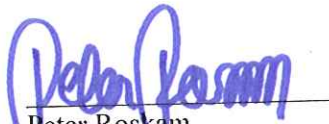
Elijah Cummings  
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Gregory Meeks  
Member of Congress


  
Michael R. Turner  
Member of Congress

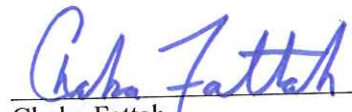
  
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson  
Member of Congress

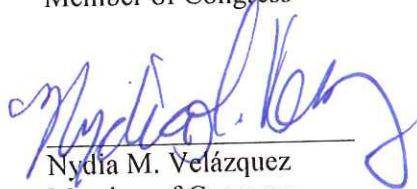
  
Adrian Smith  
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Peter Roskam  
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Marsha Blackburn  
Member of Congress

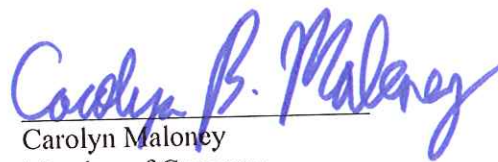
  
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Chaka Fattah  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
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Peter Welch  
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Rodney Frelinghuysen  
Member of Congress

  
Carolyn B. Maloney  
Member of Congress


  
Bob Goodlatte  
Member of Congress

  
Edward R. Royce  
Member of Congress




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Kenny Marchant  
Member of Congress



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Don Young  
Member of Congress




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Pete Viscloky  
Member of Congress



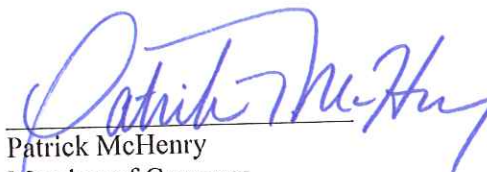
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Linda T. Sánchez  
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Walter Jones  
Member of Congress



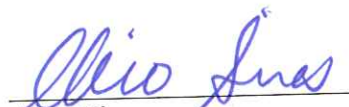
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Patrick McHenry  
Member of Congress



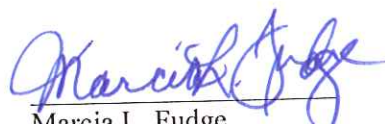
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Michael C. Burgess M.D.  
Member of Congress



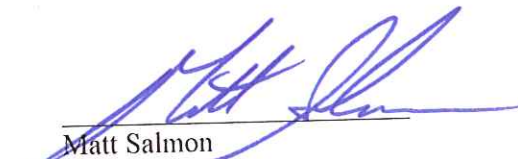
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Albio Sires  
Member of Congress




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Marcia L. Fudge  
Member of Congress




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Matt Salmon  
Member of Congress



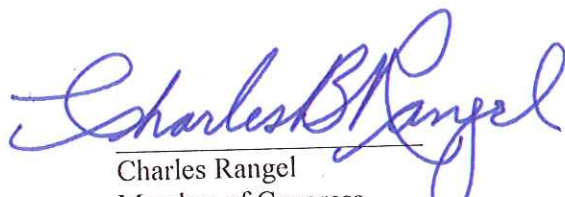
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Yvette D. Clarke  
Member of Congress



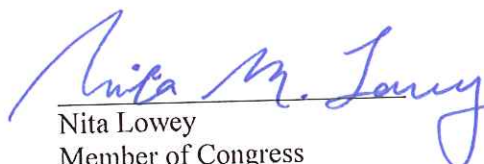
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Leonard Lance  
Member of Congress



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Charles Rangel  
Member of Congress



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Nita Lowey  
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky  
Jan Schakowsky  
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette  
Diana DeGette  
Member of Congress

Stephen F. Lynch  
Stephen F. Lynch  
Member of Congress

Steve Chabot  
Steve Chabot  
Member of Congress

Chris Smith  
Chris Smith  
Member of Congress

Michael Fitzpatrick  
Michael Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress

Harold Rogers  
Harold Rogers  
Member of Congress

Sanford D. Bishop Jr.  
Sanford Bishop  
Member of Congress

Lamar Smith  
Lamar Smith  
Member of Congress

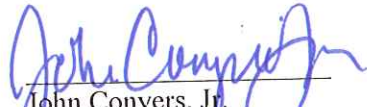
Adam B. Schiff  
Adam B. Schiff  
Member of Congress

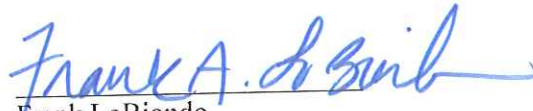
Dutch Ruppersberger  
Dutch Ruppersberger  
Member of Congress

Austin Scott  
Austin Scott  
Member of Congress


Mick Mulvaney  
Mick Mulvaney  
Member of Congress

Kristi Noem  
Kristi Noem  
Member of Congress

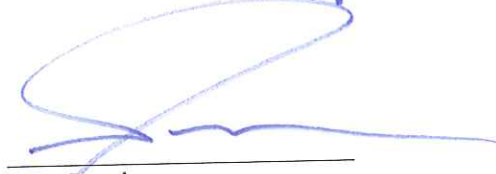
  
John Conyers, Jr.  
Member of Congress


  
Frank LoBiondo  
Member of Congress

  
Wm. Lacy Clay  
Member of Congress

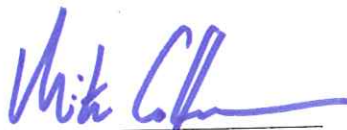
  
K. Michael Conaway  
Member of Congress

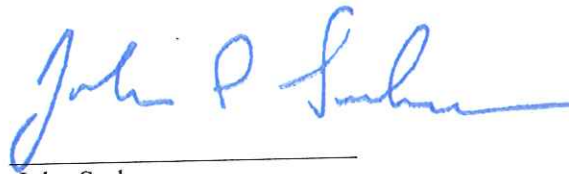
  
Brett Guthrie  
Member of Congress


  
Tom Reed  
Member of Congress


  
John Garamendi  
Member of Congress

  
Blain Luetkemeyer  
Member of Congress

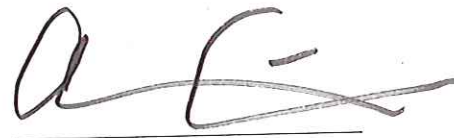
  
Mike Coffman  
Member of Congress

  
John Sarbanes  
Member of Congress

  
Ben Ray Lujan  
Member of Congress

  
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

  
Robert Latta  
Member of Congress

  
Andre Carson  
Member of Congress



Robert J. Wittman  
Member of Congress



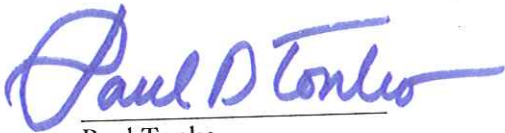
Randy Hultgren  
Member of Congress



Steve Israel  
Member of Congress



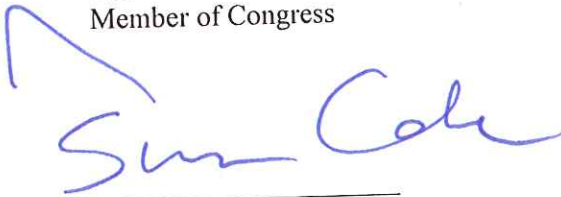
Brian Higgins  
Member of Congress



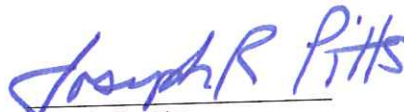
Paul Tonko  
Member of Congress



Darin LaHood  
Member of Congress



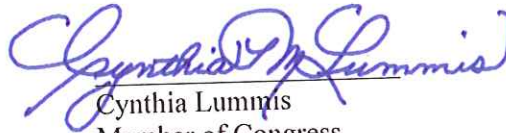
Tom Cole  
Member of Congress




Joseph R. Pitts  
Member of Congress



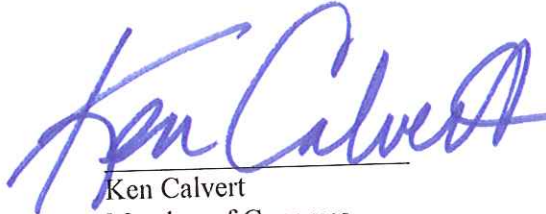
Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



Cynthia Lummis  
Member of Congress



Ron Kind  
Member of Congress



Ken Calvert  
Member of Congress

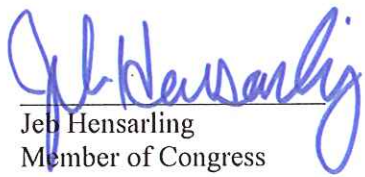


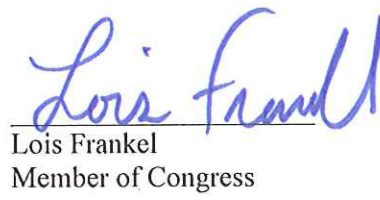
Rick W. Allen  
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson  
Member of Congress



  
Jeb Hensarling  
Member of Congress

  
Lois Frankel  
Member of Congress

  
Raúl Grijalva  
Member of Congress