

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 10, 2014

The Honorable Charles Hagel
Secretary of Defense
Department of Defense
Washington, DC 20301

Dear Secretary Hagel:

We respectfully request that the United States Armed Forces modernize their appearance regulations so that patriotic Sikh Americans can serve the country they love while abiding by their articles of faith.

As you know, three devout Sikh Americans have been granted individualized accommodations to serve in the U.S. Army. These patriotic soldiers wear turbans and maintain beards in a neat and conservative manner, both in accordance with operational requirements and their Sikh religious beliefs. They are also able to wear protective equipment, including helmets and gas masks, in conformity with safety requirements.

These Sikh soldiers have given their all in service of their country. Maj. Kamaljeet Singh Kalsi earned a Bronze Star Medal for his service in Afghanistan, which included treating multiple combat injuries and reviving two clinically dead patients back to life; Capt. Tejdeep Singh Rattan earned a NATO Medal for his service in Afghanistan; and Corporal Simran Preet Singh Lamba successfully graduated from the Military Accessions Vital to National Interest (MAVNI) program for his proficiency in Punjabi and Hindi.

Given the achievements of these soldiers and their demonstrated ability to comply with operational requirements while practicing their faith, we believe it is time for our military to make inclusion of practicing Sikh Americans the rule, not the exception.

Devout Sikhs have served in the U.S. Army since World War I, and they are presumptively permitted to serve in the armed forces of Canada, India, and the United Kingdom, among others. Notably, the current Chief of Army Staff of the Indian Army is a turbaned and bearded Sikh, even though Sikhs constitute less than two percent of India's population. Throughout the world, and now in the U.S. Army, Sikh soldiers are clearly able to maintain their religious commitments while serving capably and honorably.

We look forward to working with you to end the presumptive ban on Sikh Americans in the U.S. military and extend opportunity to Sikh Americans who wish to serve and defend our nation.


Sincerely,




Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress




Rodney P. Frelinghuysen
Member of Congress

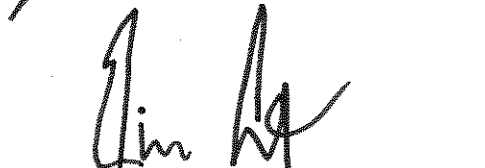

David G. Valadao
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress

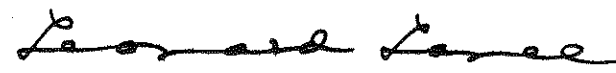

Peter J. Visclosky
Member of Congress

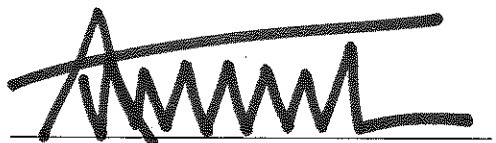

Joseph J. Heck
Member of Congress


Paul Ryan
Member of Congress

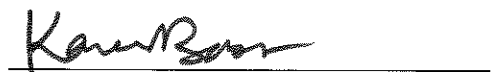

Jim Costa
Member of Congress


John Garamendi
Member of Congress


Leonard Lance
Member of Congress


Ted Poe
Member of Congress

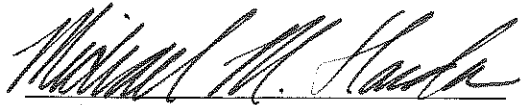

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress


Karen Bass
Member of Congress


Kerry L. Bentivolio
Member of Congress


Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

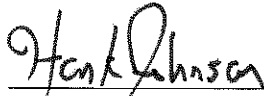

David E. Price
Member of Congress



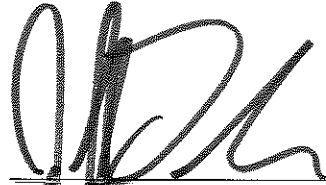
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Charles W. Dent
Member of Congress



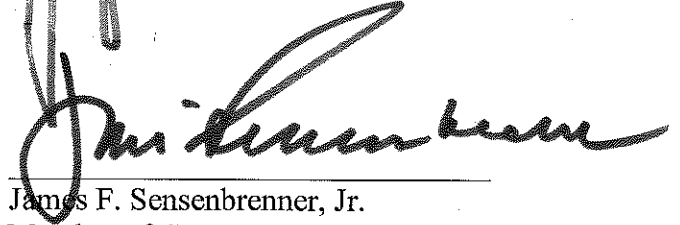
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Jeff Denham
Member of Congress



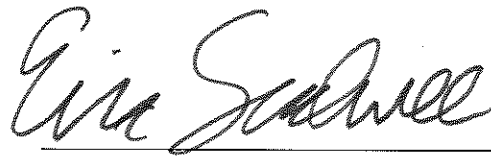
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



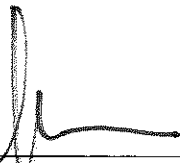
James F. Sensenbrenner, Jr.
Member of Congress



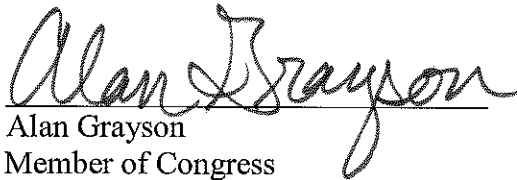
Pete Olson
Member of Congress



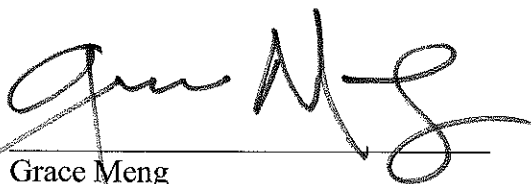
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress




Ami Bera
Member of Congress



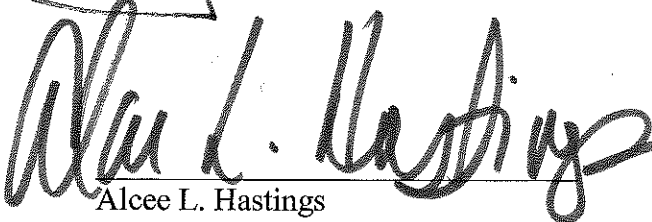
Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



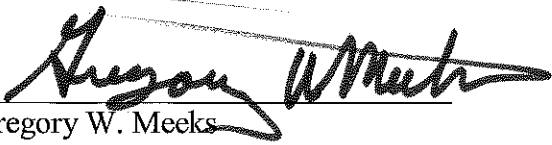
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



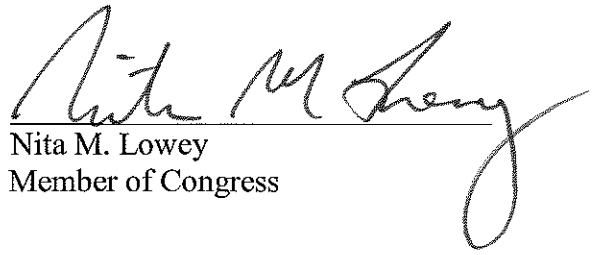
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



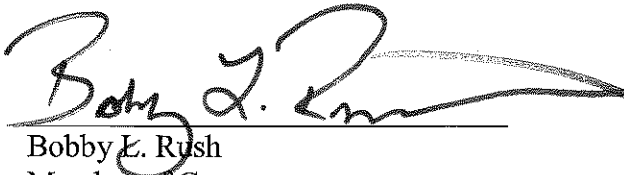
Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress



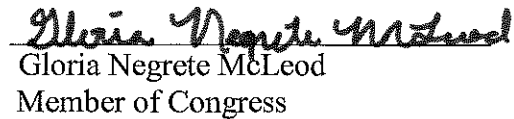
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



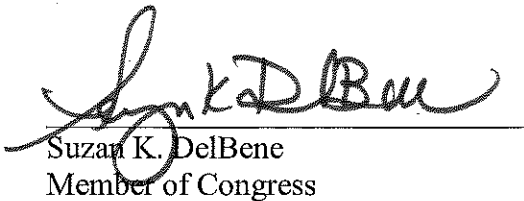
Nita M. Lowey
Member of Congress



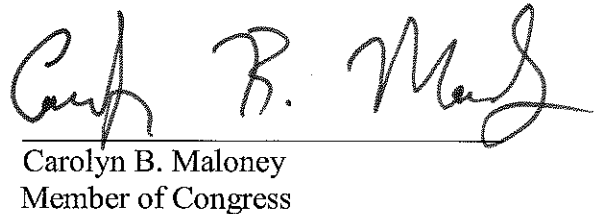
Bobby E. Rush
Member of Congress



Gloria Negrete McLeod
Member of Congress



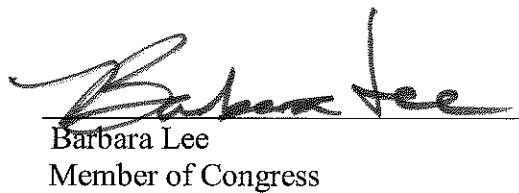
Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



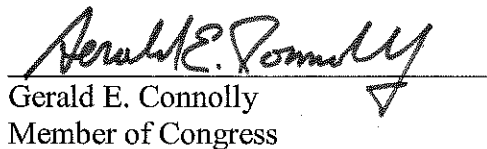
Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



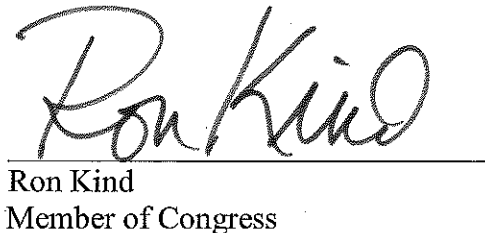
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress



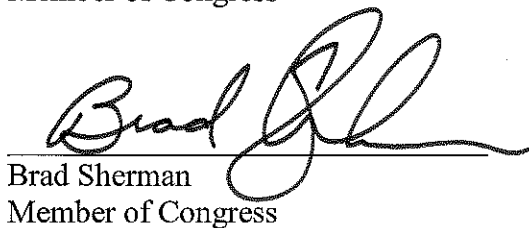
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



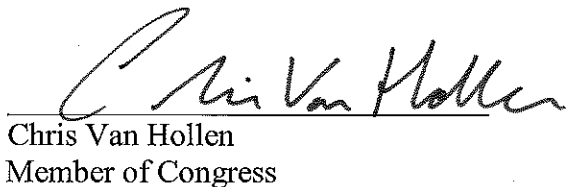
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



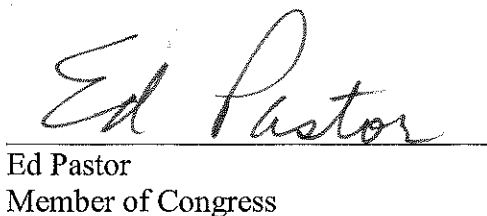
Ron Kind
Member of Congress



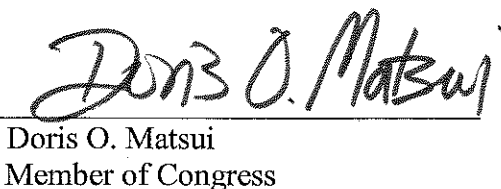
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



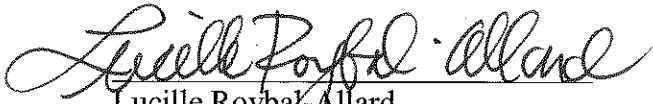
Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress





Ed Pastor
Member of Congress





Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress


Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress

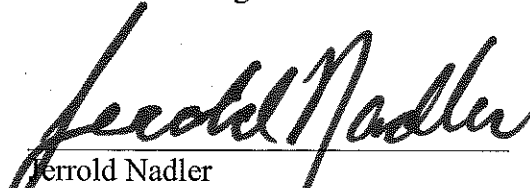

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

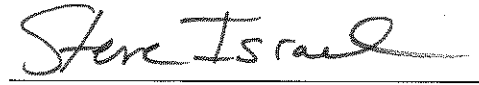

John Lewis
Member of Congress



Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress

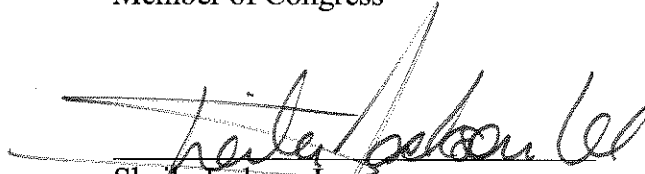

Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress

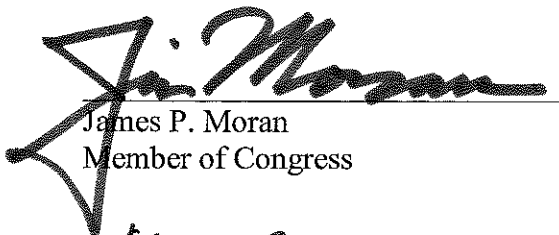

Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress


Errol Nadler
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

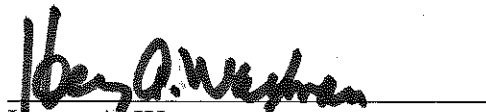

Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress


James P. Moran
Member of Congress


Gwen Moore
Member of Congress


Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress


Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress


Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress

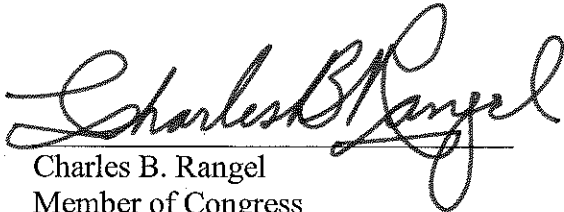

Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



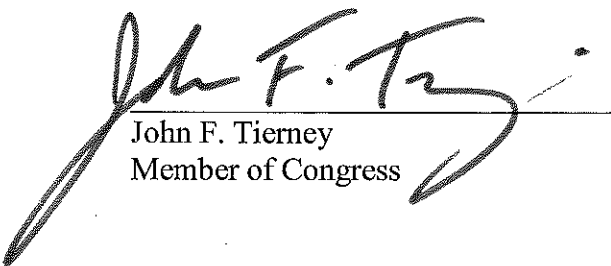
Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



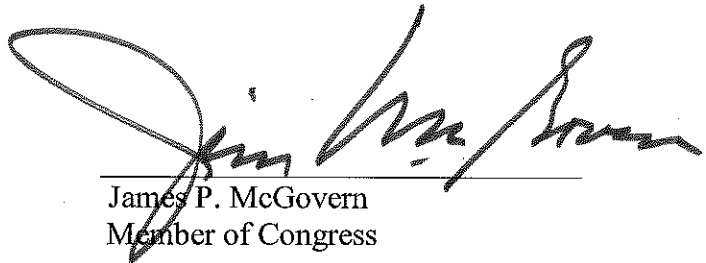
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



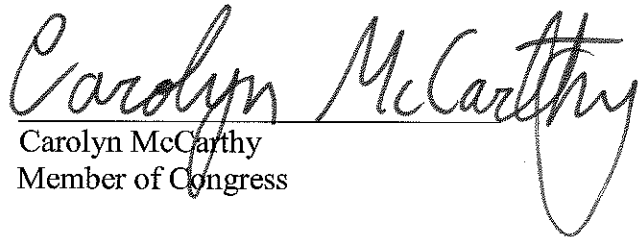
John F. Tierney
Member of Congress



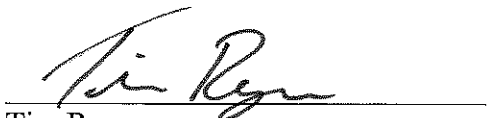
James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Gary C. Peters
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



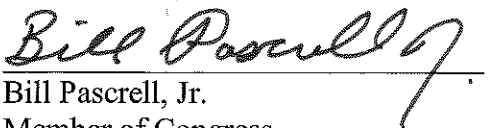
Pedro R. Pierluisi
Member of Congress



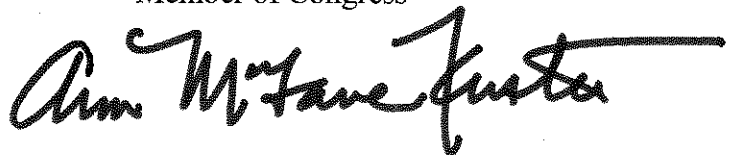
William L. Owens
Member of Congress



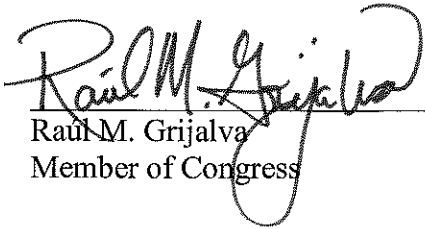
Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

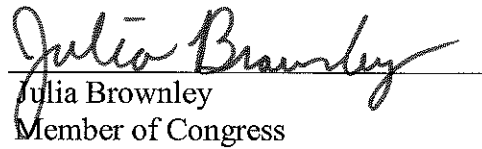


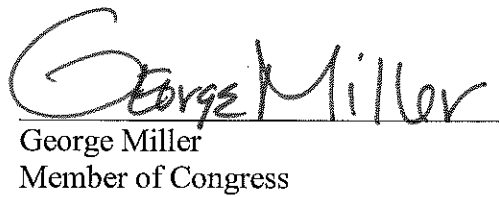
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



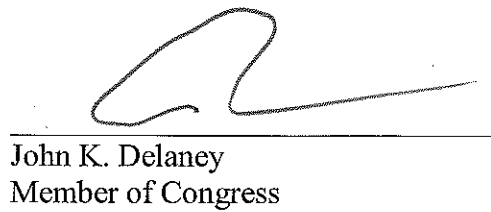
Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress

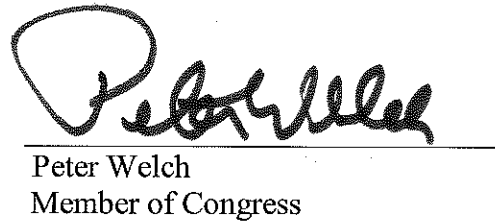

Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

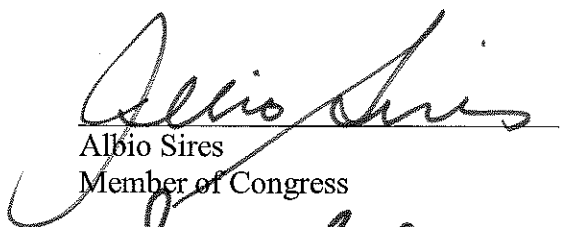

Julia Brownley
Member of Congress

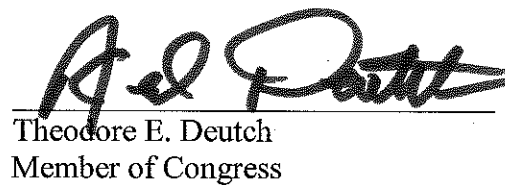

George Miller
Member of Congress

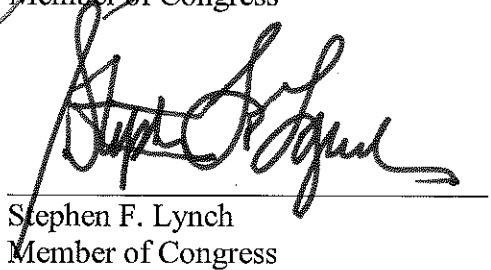

Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress


John K. Delaney
Member of Congress

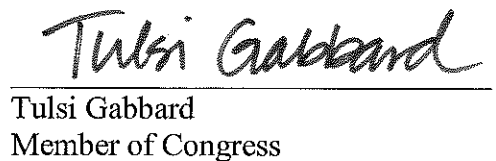

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

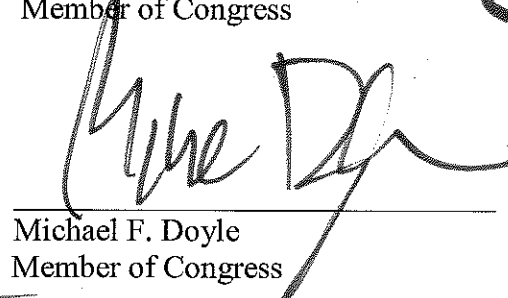

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

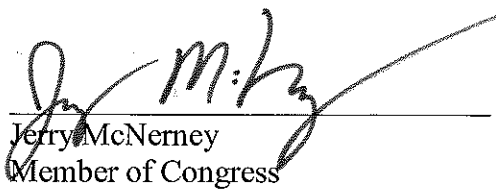

Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress

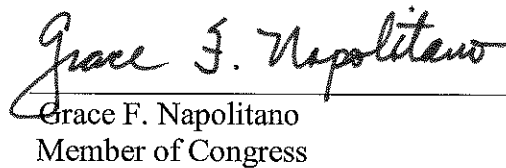

Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress


Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress


Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress

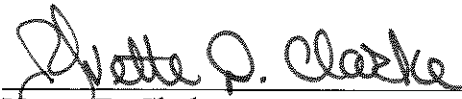

Michael F. Doyle
Member of Congress


Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress


Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



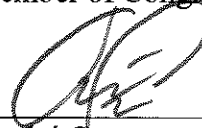
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



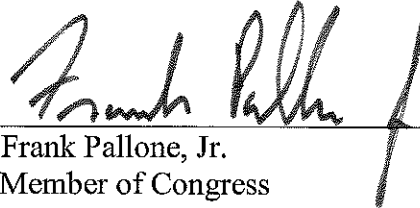
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



André Carson
Member of Congress



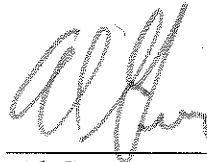
Joe Garcia
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



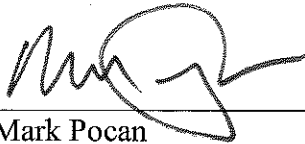
Al Green
Member of Congress



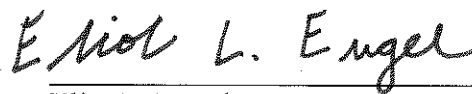
Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress



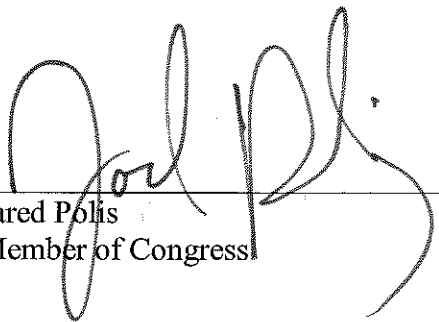
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress




Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



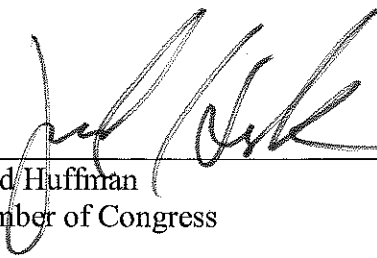
Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



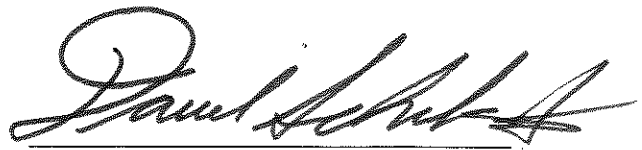
Jared Polis
Member of Congress




Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



David Schweikert
Member of Congress



Susan Brooks
Member of Congress