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FAX TRANSMISSION

CONGRESSWOMAN CAROLYN MALONEY

2430 Longworth House Office Building

Washington, DC 20515

202-225-7944

Fax: 202-225-4709

*Wk Pmt -
(+162) Pmt.
BONUS*

To: Bruce Reed
Cynthia Rice

Date:

November 24, 1999

Fax: 456-7431
456-2878

Pages, including cover: 3

From: Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney

Subject: Attached is a letter that was sent to Secretary Shalala today. The original will follow via regular mail.

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

November 19, 1999

The Honorable Donna Shalala
Secretary of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave., S.W.
Room 615-F
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Shalala:

We understand that the Department of Health and Human Services is preparing to issue proposed regulations to implement the High Performance Bonus program contained in the 1996 welfare reform act. We are writing to urge you to include measures of food stamps and Medicaid in these regulations, as well as in the temporary guidelines which will govern the program for fiscal year 2000 and possibly beyond.

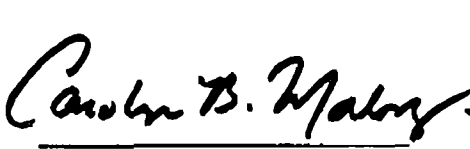
The High Performance Bonus program was created by Congress in 1996 to provide additional funding to those states that do an exceptional job in helping families escape poverty. The purpose of the program was not to reward states for slashing welfare rolls, but rather to encourage them to develop programs that enable former welfare recipients to become economically self-sufficient. Yet if families who are eligible for these programs are denied access to food stamps and Medicaid, they will find it difficult or impossible to break the cycle of poverty and truly achieve self-sufficiency.

We are very concerned by recent studies which have shown alarming drops in enrollment in the food stamps and Medicaid programs. Despite the fact that these programs remain the responsibility of the states, it appears that many states are doing an inadequate job in providing working poor families the services to which they are entitled under federal law. Incorporating measures of food stamps and Medicaid into the High Performance Bonus program will encourage states to do everything in their power to provide all eligible families with these essential services. While we support the employment measures that are currently in use, we believe that expanding the program to incorporate Medicaid and food stamps can only serve to strengthen it.

Moreover, it is critical that these measures be included in the temporary guidelines which will govern the program for fiscal year 2000. The alarming drop in participation in the food stamps and Medicaid programs among eligible families since the implementation of welfare reform is already an established fact. If we delay incorporating these measures into the High Performance Bonus, this trend will only grow worse. Acting now will encourage the states to do everything in their power to reverse this trend and truly help working poor families escape the cycle of poverty.

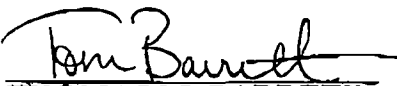
Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,


CAROLYN B. MALONEY
Member of Congress


PETE STARK
Member of Congress


TONY P. HALL
Member of Congress

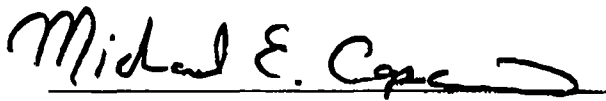
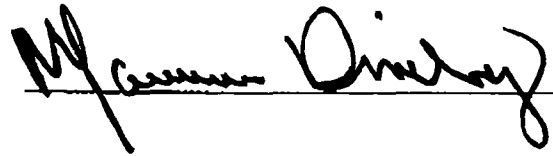
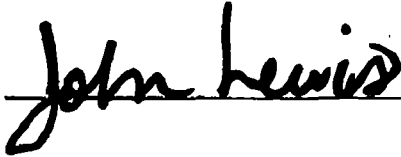
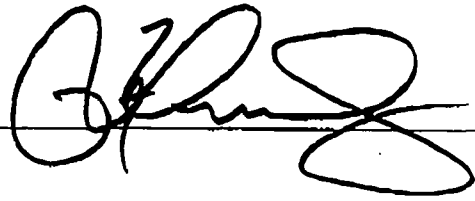
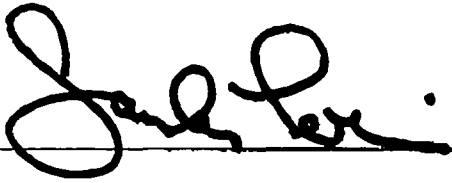

THOMAS M. BARRETT
Member of Congress


TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress

The Honorable Donna Shalala

November 19, 1999

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cc: Bruce Reed, DPC
Barbara Chow, OMB