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Collection Code: **SECLOG**

Staff Name: **PRESIDENT BUSH**

Document Date: **2/3/2008**

Correspondent: **DAN MEYER**

Subject/Description: **LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENCE SUMMARY MAIL
RECEIVED JAN 28 08 THROUGH FEB 01 08**

SCANNED
BY
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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

February 3, 2008

INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: DAN MEYER
ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

SUBJECT: LEGISLATIVE CORRESPONDENCE SUMMARY
MAIL RECEIVED JANUARY 28TH THROUGH FEBRUARY 1ST

BUDGET

- **Chairman John Spratt (D, SC-05) and Senator Kent Conrad (D, ND)**
 - “urge you to submit a budget that is realistic, comprehensive and fiscally disciplined. Specifically:”
 - “realistically account for all projected federal costs.”
 - “achieve a balanced budget using realistic projections.”
 - “ready to meet and work with members of your Administration on a fiscally responsible budget that will promote economic growth and address the other challenges facing our nation.”
- **Majority Leader Steny Hoyer (D, MD-05), Representative Tom Davis (R, VA-11), Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D, District of Columbia), and 7 House members (6 Democrats; 1 Republican)**
 - “writing to ask that you embrace this principle of pay parity for members of the armed services and the civilian Federal workforce.”
 - “equal pay adjustment in 2009 will send the important message that the services civilians and military personnel provide to America every day are highly valued.”
- **Representative Doris Matsui (D, CA-05), Representative Chris Smith (R, NJ-04), Representative Stephanie Herseth Sandlin (D, SD-At Large), and 47 Representatives (45 Democrats; 2 Republicans)**
 - “request that you provide robust funding for the National Children’s Study in your fiscal year 2009 budget request so that this landmark healthcare initiative can continue to grow and develop ... crucial to allow existing centers to reach their potential; to build on the twenty-two new centers inaugurated this year; to continue enrolling children in the sample set; and to begin generating data.”

FUTUREGEN

- **Senator Dick Durbin (D, IL), Senator Barack Obama (D, IL), and 8 House members (5 Democrats; 3 Republicans)**
 - “Secretary of Energy informed a bipartisan, bicameral gathering of the Illinois Congress Delegation that he would not release a Record of Decision (ROD) on FutureGen ... [and] stated he was going to scrap your signature clean coal initiative, redesign it, and recompet it.”
 - “he refused to delay his announcement in order for us to help address outstanding issues with the Department of the Alliance.”
 - “Secretary released a statement which indicated that his reluctance to move forward ... was due to cost increases in the past five years. Yet when ... assured that we were prepared to provide adequate funding and to resolve any other outstanding issues ... he unequivocally refused.”
 - “We feel that the Secretary misled us and the people of Illinois, creating false hope in a FutereGen project which he had no intention of funding or supporting.”
 - “urge you to keep FutureGen on track, so that this project can begin construction and become a reality.”

AMERICAN COMPETITIVENESS INITIATIVE (ACI)

- **Representative Judy Biggert (R, IL-13), Representative Ralph Hall (R, TX-04) and 4 House Republicans**
 - “strong advocates of ACI ... and we commend you for your continued commitment to increasing the federal government’s investment in the scientific research critical to America’s economic growth and competitiveness.”
 - “Congress failed to match your commitment ... providing less than you requested for science agencies ... [so] urge you to include \$300 million in your fiscal year 2008 emergency supplemental appropriations request for the DOE Office of Science and the research, scientists and engineers, unique user facilities, and international collaborations that it supports.”

UKRAINE

- **Representative Robert Wexler (D, FL-19) and Representative Elton Gallegly (R, CA-24)**
 - “support the efforts of Ukraine’s leadership which has in unison expressed unequivocally its desires to build on their nation’s democratic progress and further integrate into NATO and Euro-Atlantic institutions.”
 - “have an historic opportunity to integrate Ukraine into the main transatlantic security institution at the Bucharest Summit and send a clear signal to all Ukrainians that they are an integral part of the transatlantic community ... essential that your Administration not only reiterate the American position ‘that NATO should leave the door open to those democratic states who meet membership requirements,’ but openly advocate for Ukraine’s NATO.”
 - “Ukraine’s future membership in NATO would further consolidate democracy, peace and stability in Europe ... they would be a model for countries in Eastern Europe.”

H-2B VISA PROGRAM

- **Representative Bart Stupak (D, MI-01), Representative Jim Gerlach (R, PA-06), Senator Barbara Mikulski (D, MD), Senator Joe Lieberman (I, CT), 27 Senators (17 Republicans; 10 Democrats) and 62 Representatives (33 Democrats; 29 Republicans)**
 - “ask that you, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Labor work with Congress to ensure that small businesses throughout the country can keep their doors open this year.”
 - “the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) has already received enough applications to exceed the cap for H-2B visas for the second half of FY 2008 ... thousands of small businesses with peak seasons in late spring and summer will be locked out of the visa process ... need to extend the returning worker program to help these businesses fill their seasonal labor needs and keep full-time Americans working ... businesses will face labor shortages and increased economic hardship this year.”
 - “request that you, as President, use your Executive Authority to direct the Departments of Homeland Security and Labor to continue the H-2B returning worker program as outlined in 2005 legislation.”

FARM BILL

- **Representative Jeff Flake (R, AZ-06), Representative Jeb Hensarling (R, TX-05), Representative Paul Ryan (R, WI-01)**
 - “urge you to veto any Farm Bill reauthorization conference report that funds agriculture programs by raising taxes, fails to substantively reform current U.S. farm programs, and is not fiscally responsible.”
 - “House and Senate versions ... finance billions in new spending with various tax increases, expand or add new unnecessary farm programs, lack the reforms your Administration has identified as necessary and include numerous trade distorting provisions that would jeopardize existing U.S. trade agreements.”

MEXICO

- **Representative Henry Cueller (D, TX-28) and Representative Michael McCaul (R, TX-10)**
 - “traveled to Mexico ... [and] pleased to report our meetings left us with a favorable impression of the commitment made by the leadership of Mexico who are quite literally putting their lives on the line to reign in the criminal organizations.”
 - “believe your efforts with Mexican President Calderon to develop a cooperative security package is timely and has the potential to provide a level of synergy which will significantly enhance our National Strategy for Homeland Security.”

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We are writing to urge you to submit a budget that is realistic, comprehensive and fiscally disciplined. Specifically, we hope your budget also will:

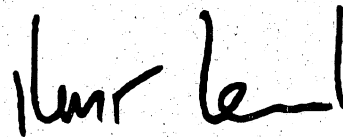
- 1) Realistically account for all projected federal costs: None of your prior budgets has fully accounted for expected costs of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan, adjustment of physician payments under Medicare, and remedies to the Alternative Minimum Tax. For planning and policy purposes, the 2009 budget request should fully capture all policy proposals that the Administration supports. Your budget will set the framework for how these items are presented in this year's budget process.
- 2) Achieve a balanced budget using realistic projections: We support the goal of a balanced budget. Over the long-term, the federal budget is on an unsustainable path, and we have a responsibility to our children and grandchildren to guard their economic future by adopting policies that are fiscally sound.

Given the economic conditions and the long-term budgetary challenges facing our nation, this year's budget is an especially important one. We are ready to meet and work with members of your Administration on a fiscally responsible budget that will promote economic growth and address the other challenges facing our nation.

Sincerely,



John M. Spratt, Jr.
Chairman
House Budget Committee



Kent Conrad
Chairman
Senate Budget Committee



Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 30, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

As members of Congress representing tens of thousands of federal civilian employees and military personnel, we are writing to ask that you embrace the principle of pay parity for members of the armed services and the civilian Federal workforce in your fiscal year 2009 budget proposal that you will shortly be sending to Congress.

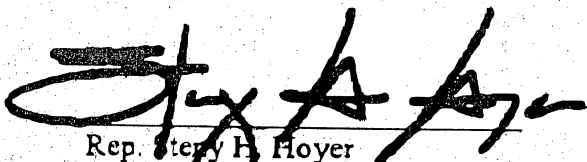
Pay parity is not a new concept. Historically, Congress has expressed strong bipartisan support for parity in pay adjustments between our military and federal civilian sectors, due to the essential service military and civilian employees provide to our nation and the vast wage gap that exists between public and private sector wages.

In nearly every year during the past two decades, there have been equal adjustments in the compensation of members of the uniformed services and the compensation of civilian employees of the United States as a means under the General Schedule system to help achieve pay comparability between the public and private sector.

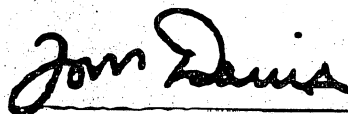
We cannot express strongly enough the importance of continuing the tradition of pay parity between military and civilian employees in the coming fiscal year. As we fight the war on terrorism at home and abroad, both the armed services and the federal civilian workforce are integral to fulfilling the role of government for the American people. An equal pay adjustment in 2009 will send the important message that the services civilians and military personnel provide to America every day are highly valued. In addition, the federal government is facing a "human capital crisis," with many of our most experienced employees poised to retire. It is critical that we be able to recruit and retain quality employees in the future.

Thanking you and with kindest personal regards, we are

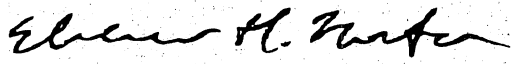
Sincerely,



Rep. Henry H. Hoyer
5th Congressional District, Maryland



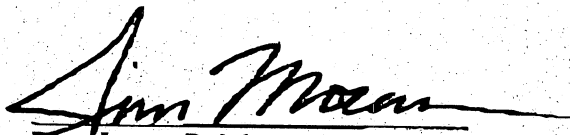
Rep. Tom Davis
11th Congressional District, Virginia



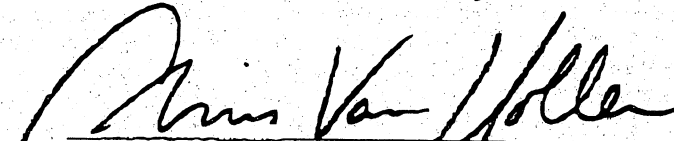
Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton
District of Columbia



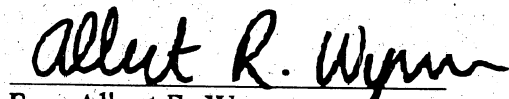
Rep. Elijah E. Cummings
7th Congressional District, Maryland



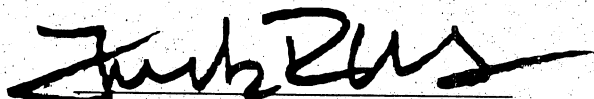
Rep. James P. Moran
8th Congressional District, Virginia



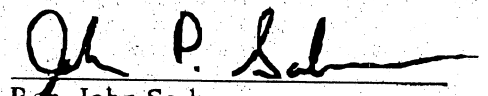
Rep. Chris Van Hollen
8th Congressional District, Maryland



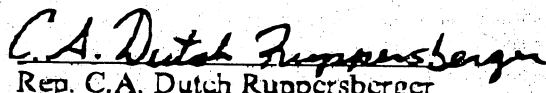
Rep. Albert R. Wynn
4th Congressional District, Maryland



Rep. Frank R. Wolf
10th Congressional District, Virginia



Rep. John Sarbanes
3rd Congressional District, Maryland



Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
2nd Congressional District, Maryland

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

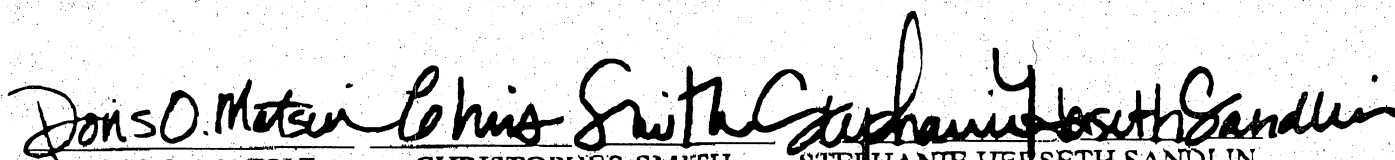
We write to request that you provide robust funding for the National Children's Study in your fiscal year 2009 budget request so that this landmark healthcare initiative can continue to grow and develop. Investing in the National Children's Study will yield significant benefits for children in future years, and will give the medical community the knowledge it needs to conquer some of the most persistent challenges to our children's health.

The National Children's Study is the most comprehensive long-term study of children's health ever undertaken in the United States. The Study will follow 100,000 children from before birth to age twenty-one. Data from the Study will help researchers pinpoint causes of—and design treatments for—numerous conditions affecting America's youth, such as premature birth, autism, asthma, developmental delay, diabetes, mental illness, and learning disorders. These health-related benefits will also be complemented by significant taxpayer savings that will result from the Study's data. The National Institute of Child Health and Human Development estimates that the healthcare savings from the National Children's Study could be as great as \$9.7 billion per year.

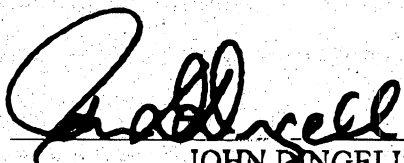
In all, the National Children's Study will enroll children from over 100 counties across the United States. Providing robust funding for the Study in fiscal year 2009 is crucial to allow existing centers to reach their potential; to build on the twenty-two new centers inaugurated this year; to continue enrolling children in the sample set; and to begin generating data. Recent news from the Study that existing funds will be used to expand into ten to fifteen additional locations is evidence that investing in this initiative today pays both immediate and long-term dividends.

We recognize that you, like Congress, are faced with many worthy and competing budgetary priorities. Congress provided full funding for the National Children's Study in fiscal year 2008, and we respectfully urge you to build on this progress to ensure that sufficient support is provided for the Study in your budget request for fiscal year 2009. We look forward to working with you to ensure that this landmark healthcare initiative remains a priority for our Nation now and in the future.

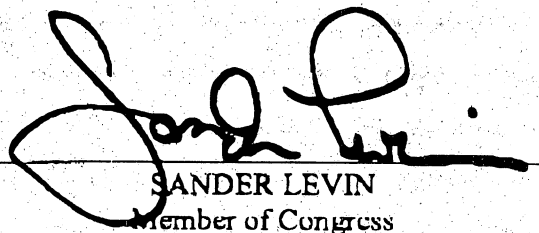
Sincerely,


DORIS O. MATSUI CHRISTOPHER SMITH STEPHANIE HERSETH SANDLIN
Member of Congress Member of Congress Member of Congress

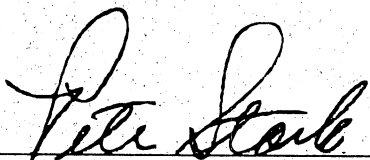
National Children's Study
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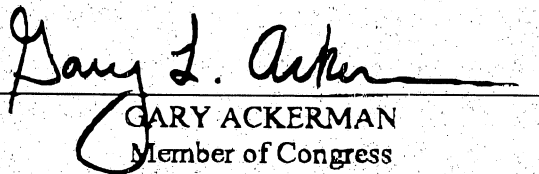
JOHN DINGELL
Member of Congress



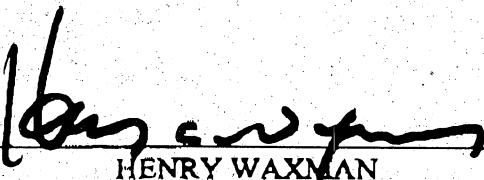
SANDER LEVIN
Member of Congress



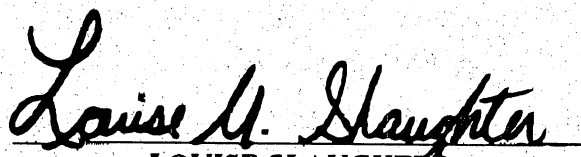
PETE STARK
Member of Congress



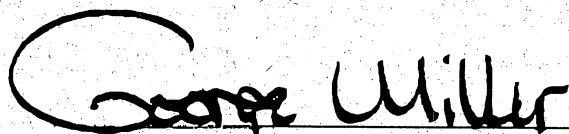
GARY ACKERMAN
Member of Congress



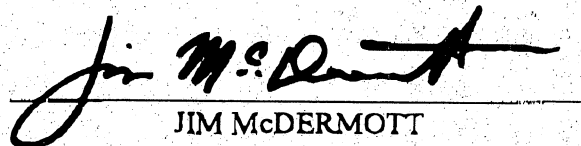
HENRY WAXMAN
Member of Congress



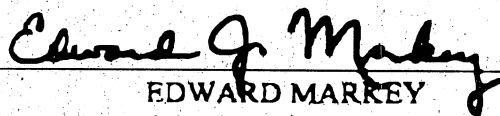
LOUISE SLAUGHTER
Member of Congress



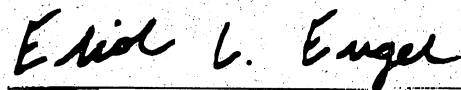
GEORGE MILLER
Member of Congress



JIM McDERMOTT
Member of Congress



EDWARD MARKEY
Member of Congress



ELIOT ENGEL
Member of Congress



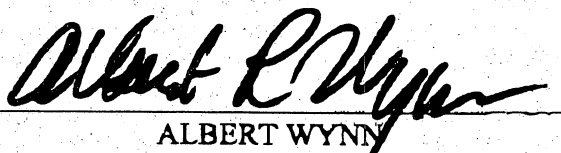
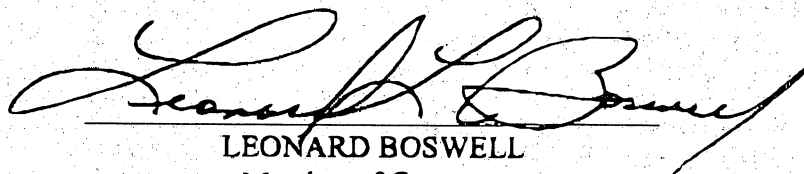
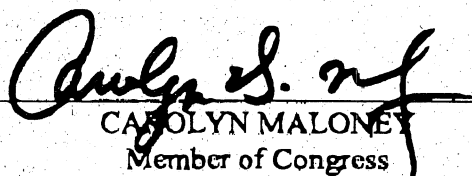
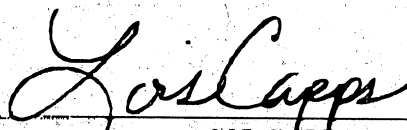
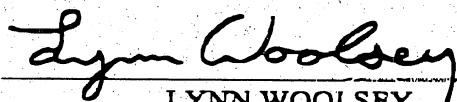
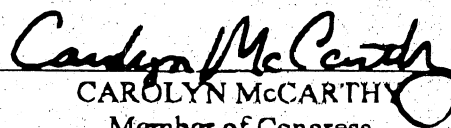
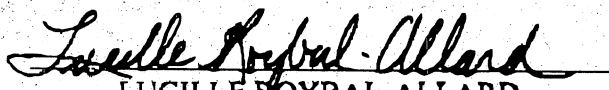
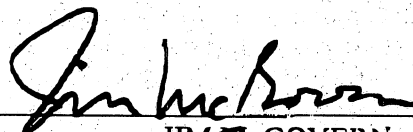
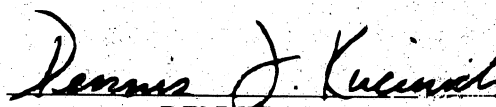
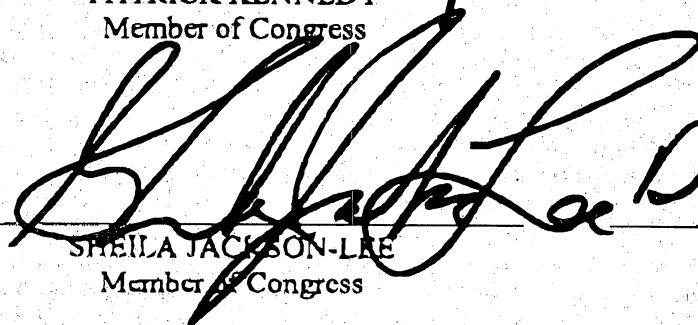
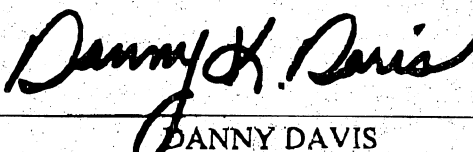
DALE KILDEE
Member of Congress



NEIL ABERCROMBIE
Member of Congress

National Children's Study

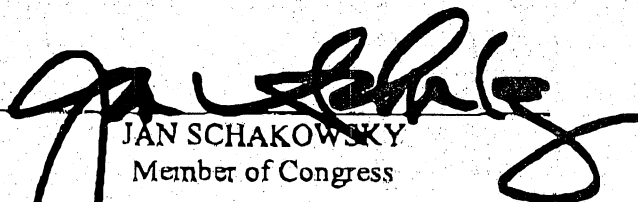
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ALBERT WYNN
Member of CongressLEONARD BOSWELL
Member of CongressCAROLYN MALONEY
Member of CongressLOIS CAPPS
Member of CongressLYNN WOOLSEY
Member of CongressCAROLYN MCCARTHY
Member of CongressLUCILLE ROYBAL-ALLARD
Member of CongressJIM MCGOVERN
Member of CongressPATRICK KENNEDY
Member of CongressDENNIS KUCINICH
Member of CongressSHEILA JACKSON-LEE
Member of CongressDANNY DAVIS
Member of Congress

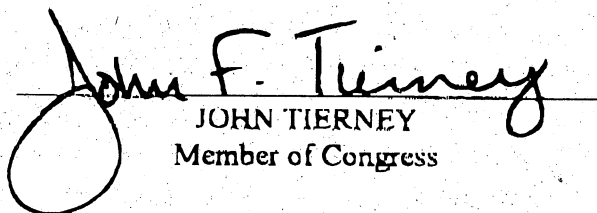
National Children's Study
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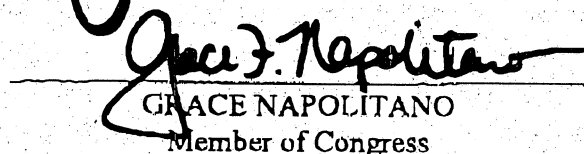
ELLEN TAUSCHER
Member of Congress



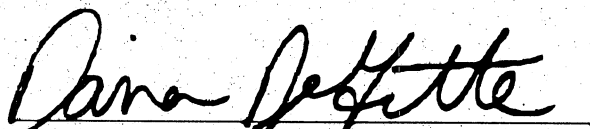
JAN SCHAKOWSKY
Member of Congress



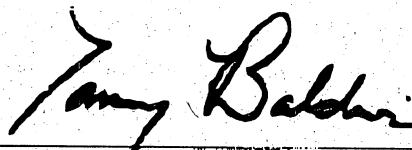
JOHN TIERNEY
Member of Congress



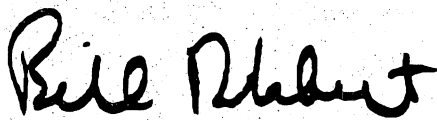
GRACE NAPOLITANO
Member of Congress



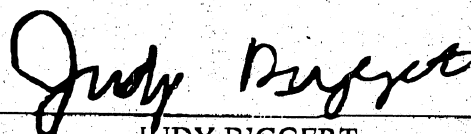
DIANA DeGETTE
Member of Congress



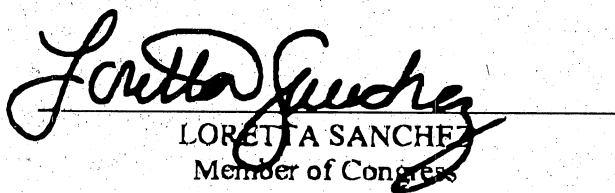
TAMMY BALDWIN
Member of Congress



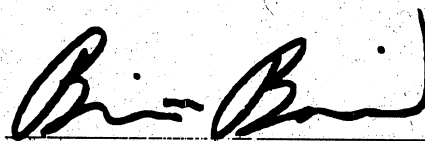
WILLIAM DELAHUNT
Member of Congress



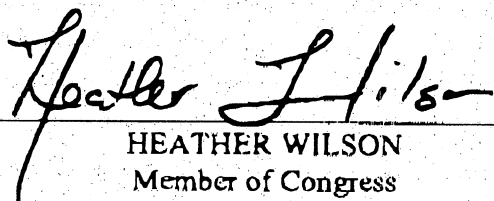
JUDY BIGGERT
Member of Congress



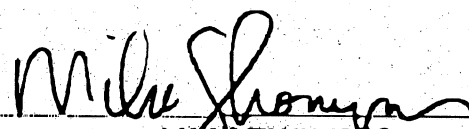
LORETTA SANCHEZ
Member of Congress



BRIAN BAIRD
Member of Congress

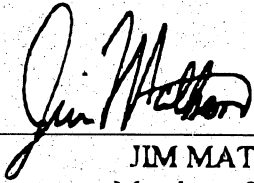


HEATHER WILSON
Member of Congress

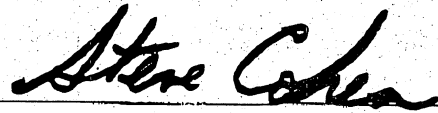


MIKE THOMPSON
Member of Congress

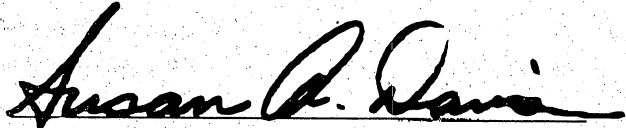
National Children's Study
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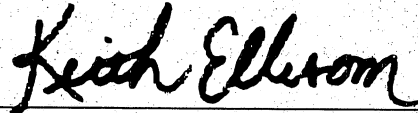
JIM MATHESON
Member of Congress



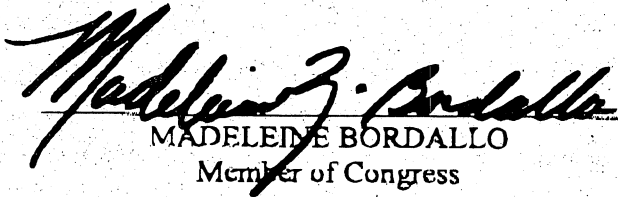
STEVE COHEN
Member of Congress



SUSAN DAVIS
Member of Congress



KEITH ELLISON
Member of Congress



MADELEINE BORDALLO
Member of Congress



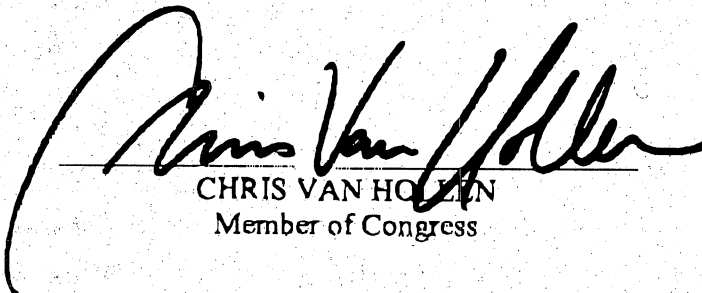
PHIL HARE
Member of Congress



BRAD MILLER
Member of Congress



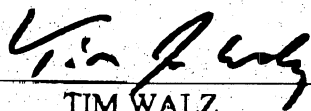
MAZIE HIRONO
Member of Congress



CHRIS VAN HOLLEN
Member of Congress



BETTY SUTTON
Member of Congress



TIM WALZ
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

January 30, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President, United States of America
The White House
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. President:

Yesterday, we were informed by your Secretary of Energy that he was radically restructuring the FutureGen project -- effectively killing the program in Central Illinois. As you may recall, FutureGen is the cornerstone of your clean coal initiative and a project that your Administration has been pushing for more than five years. This project will design and construct a commercial scale coal-fueled power plant with a large-scale carbon capture and storage capacity.

Many have argued that this abrupt about face by Secretary Bodman was the direct result of the FutureGen Alliance choosing Mattoon, Illinois as the site, over Texas applicants. While we'd like not to believe this theory, there is no other plausible explanation. As recently as November 30, 2007, Secretary Bodman assured Members of the Illinois Congressional Delegation that FutureGen was on track for final approval from the Department by the end of the calendar year, including a Record of Decision (ROD). After careful scientific vetting and a comprehensive environmental review, the FutureGen Alliance chose Mattoon as the site on December 18, 2007.

Yesterday, the Secretary informed a bipartisan, bicameral gathering of the Illinois Congressional Delegation that he would not release a ROD on FutureGen. Further, he stated that he was going to scrap your signature clean coal initiative, redesign it, and recompet it. And he refused to delay his announcement in order for us to help address outstanding issues with the Department and the Alliance. This after the community, the State of Illinois, private industry, and international partners spent years successfully working together to site FutureGen in Mattoon, Illinois and to provide much needed funding.

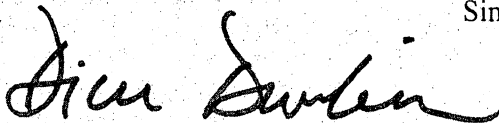
Last night, the Secretary released a statement which indicated that his reluctance to move forward with the project was due to cost increases in the past five years. Yet when the Secretary was assured that we were prepared to provide adequate funding and to resolve any other outstanding issues between the Administration and the FutureGen Alliance if he would take steps to move FutureGen forward, he unequivocally refused. Given that, it is hard to believe that cost concerns constitute his real objection to this project.

Mr. President, we have lost confidence in Secretary Bodman. From moving the Rare Isotope Accelerator project to the back burner (a spirited competition between Illinois and Michigan) to short-changing our national laboratories to his troubling comments about ethanol and alternative fuels to this recent FutureGen debacle, he has proven to be no ally in our efforts to promote scientific research, address new technology for clean energy development and to boost our struggling economy.

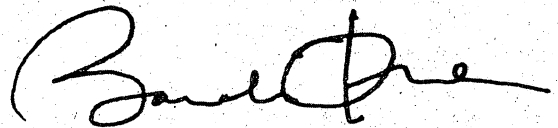
We feel that the Secretary misled us and the people of Illinois, creating false hope in a FutureGen project which he had no intention of funding or supporting. We are writing today to urge you to keep FutureGen on track, so that this project can begin construction and become a reality.

Mr. President, we, the State of Illinois, and the FutureGen Alliance stand ready to move this important project forward. It would be unfortunate to wait for the next Administration to complete the project that you announced and have promoted for more than five years.

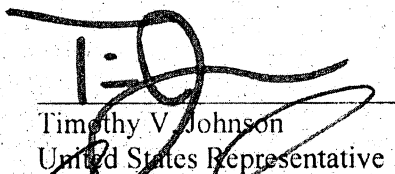
Sincerely,



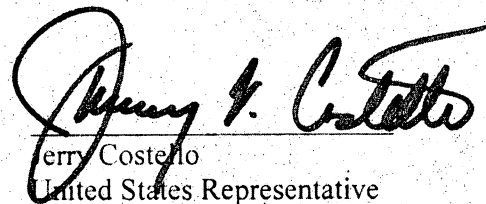
Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator



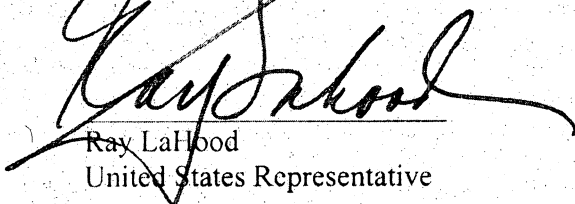
Barack Obama
United States Senator



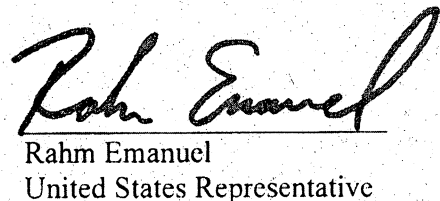
Timothy V. Johnson
United States Representative



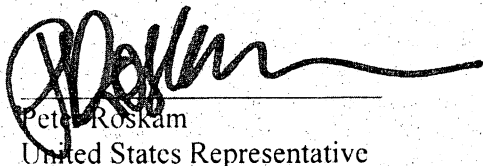
Jerry Costello
United States Representative



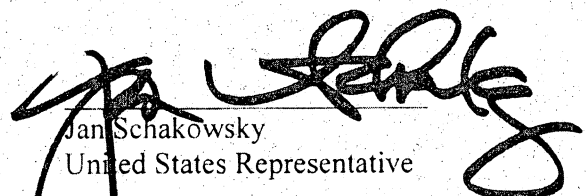
Ray LaHood
United States Representative



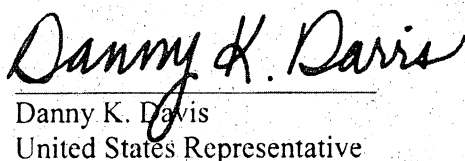
Rahm Emanuel
United States Representative



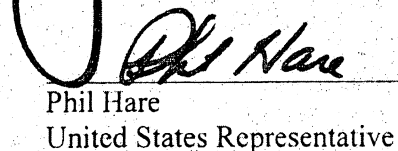
Peter Roskam
United States Representative



Jan Schakowsky
United States Representative



Danny K. Davis
United States Representative



Phil Hare
United States Representative

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Mr. President:

When you unveiled your American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) in February of 2006, you stated, "Federal investment in research and development has proved critical to keeping America's economy strong by generating knowledge and tools upon which new technologies are developed." We agreed with you then, we still agree with you, and we were heartened by your remarks during last evening's State of the Union address. We have been strong advocates of the ACI since its inception, and we commend you for your continued commitment to increasing the federal government's investment in the scientific research critical to America's economic growth and competitiveness.

Unfortunately, Congress failed to match your commitment in each of the last two years, providing less than you requested for the science agencies critical to the ACI. The impact of the fiscal year 2008 omnibus appropriations bill on one such agency, the Department of Energy's (DOE) Office of Science, is particularly troubling. Overall, the budget for the DOE Office of Science – excluding \$125 million in earmarked funds in the fiscal year 2008 omnibus – increased at a rate less than inflation. Funding for a number of programs, including High Energy Physics and the U.S. contribution to the international fusion experiment ITER, declined significantly or were cut altogether.

The unfortunate consequences of the severe underfunding in the omnibus are many. It signals to the world that the U.S. is a fickle partner in scientific collaborations. It limits American access to the scientific results of projects like ITER, and jeopardizes international contributions to U.S.-based projects such as the International Linear Collider (ILC). It forced the DOE Office of Science to announce that it will have to furlough or layoff over 550 scientists, engineers, and technical and administrative support staff at our national laboratories, leading to the permanent loss of this expertise. It means the DOE Office of Science will not be able to support 90-100 postdoctoral fellows and graduate students at the labs, and possibly up to 500 postdoctoral fellows at American universities, sending the wrong message to America's youth that studies and careers in science and math are fraught with uncertainty. It leaves the DOE Office of Science with little choice but to shutter a number of unique facilities used by industry, academic, and government scientists, and curtail the operation of other user facilities by 20 to 25 percent, forcing many U.S. companies to conduct their research at overseas facilities with similar capabilities.

The Honorable George W. Bush

Page 2

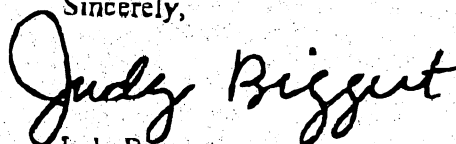
These unfortunate consequences can be reversed. We strongly urge you to include \$300 million in your fiscal year 2008 emergency supplemental appropriations request for the DOE Office of Science and the research, scientists and engineers, unique user facilities, and international collaborations that it supports.

This supplemental funding addresses a real emergency – the permanent loss of key scientific personnel and the degradation of America's leadership in science. It would avert the layoff of some of the nation's best scientists and engineers at a time when there is a bipartisan commitment to stimulating the economy and taking the steps necessary to avoid a recession. While the continued employment of these scientists will stimulate the economy in the short-term, their research will contribute greatly to America's *long-term* economic growth, competitiveness, and job creation.

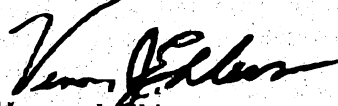
This supplemental funding also will maximize the run-time of user facilities at our national laboratories, making the most of past U.S. investments in unique, one-of-a-kind facilities that are critical to innovation in industry and academia. It will renew our commitment to international scientific projects like ITER and the ILC, and will help the U.S. retain its leadership in the field of High Energy Physics. Finally, your request of supplemental funding for the DOE Office of Science will send a message to young Americans pursuing – or thinking of pursuing – degrees and careers in science, math, and technology that their President recognizes how invaluable their knowledge and expertise are to the future security and competitiveness of our nation.

Mr. President, including \$300 million for the DOE Office of Science in your fiscal year 2008 emergency supplemental request is consistent with your efforts to stimulate the economy and achieve the goals of your visionary American Competitiveness Initiative. We strongly urge you to make this request, and are prepared to support it as the supplemental appropriations bill makes its way through Congress. Please contact us if we can be of assistance in any way.

Sincerely,



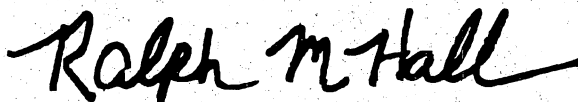
Judy Biggert
Member of Congress



Vernon J. Ehlers
Member of Congress



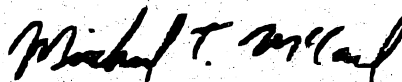
Robert J. Wittman
Member of Congress



Ralph M. Hall
Member of Congress



Koscoe G. Bartlett
Member of Congress



Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress

The Honorable George W. Bush
Page 3

cc: The Honorable Jim Nussle, Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Honorable Jack Marburger, Director, Office of Science and Technology Policy
The Honorable Samuel Bodman, Secretary of Energy, Department of Energy
The Honorable Raymond Orbach, Under Secretary of Science, Department of Energy
The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations
The Honorable David Hobson, Ranking Member, Committee on Appropriations,
Subcommittee on Energy and Water Development

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 29, 2008

George W. Bush
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20502

Dear President Bush:

As you are aware the leadership of the Ukrainian government President Victor Yushchenko, Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko and Chairman of the Verhovna Rada Arseniy Yatsenyuk sent a letter to the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) Security General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer on January 8, 2008, expressing their interest in accession to NATO's Membership Action Plan (MAP) at the Bucharest Summit in April. To this end, we strongly support the efforts of Ukraine's leadership which has in unison expressed unequivocally its desires to build on their nation's democratic progress and further integrate into NATO and Euro-Atlantic institutions.

We believe the United States and our NATO allies in Europe have an historic opportunity to integrate Ukraine into the main transatlantic security institution at the Bucharest Summit and send a clear signal to all Ukrainians that they are an integral part of the transatlantic community. Agreeing to a MAP for Ukraine is not only critical to Kyiv's goals of reform but it is also essential to strengthening collective security in Europe and globally which has been the goal of the United States and our European allies.

President Bush, it is essential that your Administration not only reiterate the American position "that NATO should leave the door open to those democratic states who meet membership requirements," but openly advocate for Ukraine's NATO membership. From our perspective Ukraine has made significant economic, political and social reforms while participating in NATO's Intensified Dialogue. It is clear from the letter to Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer that the Ukrainian government understands fully that completing these reforms is a prerequisite on the road to NATO membership.

We believe Ukraine's future membership in NATO would further consolidate democracy, peace and stability in Europe. Once Ukraine has met alliance standards and achieved NATO membership, they would be a model for countries in Eastern Europe, including Belarus, as well as nations in Central Asia.

Not only is Ukraine taking concrete steps to fulfill key reforms similar to those implemented by new NATO members from Central and Eastern Europe in the run-up to their receiving MAP - Kyiv has been a key security partner globally. Ukraine has been a staunch ally of the United States and Europe from placing its troops in harms way in Iraq to peacekeeping operations in Africa and the Balkans. In the NATO Freedom Consolidation Act of 2007 which you signed into law in April 2007, you joined Congress in expressing great "appreciation for Ukraine's substantial contributions to our common security, including through participation in NATO-led operations and efforts to promote regional cooperation."

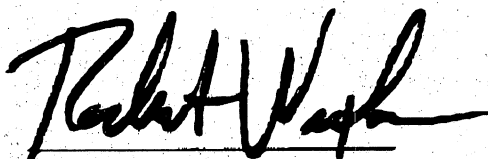
Mr. President, you have openly stated that you are a "supporter of Ukraine becoming a member of NATO." We strongly support your position and believe that is essential to expand NATO to

meet the growing security challenges facing the United States and Europe in a challenging global environment. While we understand that a MAP for Ukraine does not guarantee it full membership in NATO and that Kyiv must continue to show progress towards fulfillment of the NATO Ukraine Action plan – it is the logical next step for Ukraine and for this alliance.

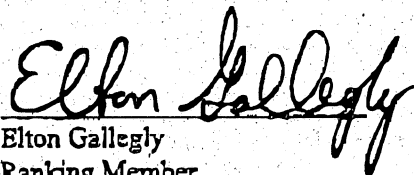
As your Administration works closely with our European allies to prepare for the NATO Summit in Bucharest we encourage you to take steps to fulfill your vision of a strengthened NATO outlined in your June 15, 2001, speech in Warsaw, Poland. During your speech you stated that “all of Europe's new democracies, from the Baltic to the Black Sea and all that lie between, should have the same chance for security and freedom--and the same chance to join the institutions of Europe--as Europe's old democracies. We believe Ukraine has made great strides since the Orange Revolution in the Fall of 2004 and it is essential that the United States and our European partners in NATO take historic steps and provide a MAP to Ukraine this April in Bucharest.

We look forward to working with you on this critically important issue and as you prepare for the NATO Summit in Bucharest.

Sincerely,



Robert Wexler
Chairman
Europe Subcommittee



Elton Gallegly
Ranking Member
Europe Subcommittee

cc: Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice
Secretary of Defense Robert Gates
United States Ambassador to Ukraine William B. Taylor, Jr.

Congress of the United States**Washington, DC 20515**From: WW
To: HOUSE
LA CORR.

January 25, 2008

The Honorable George W. Bush
President
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Bush:

The H-2B visa program offers assistance to small businesses who cannot hire enough American workers during peak seasons. We ask that you, the Department of Homeland Security, and the Department of Labor work with Congress to ensure that small businesses throughout the country can keep their doors open this year.

The H-2B visa was designed to provide access to non-immigrant, temporary workers for seasonal and peak load needs when no American workers can be found. These foreign workers offer short-term help and return to their home country at the end of their season. H-2B visas are capped at 66,000 visas per year. Even with 66,000 visas a year, it still does not meet the labor needs of seasonal businesses.

To help fill the additional needs, Congress established the H-2B returning worker program in 2005. Under this program, a worker who has received an H-2B visa in one of the three previous fiscal years is not counted against the 66,000 visa cap. Unfortunately, after three successful years the returning worker program expired on September 30, 2007.

By January 2, 2008, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) had already received enough applications to exceed the cap for H-2B visas for the second half of FY 2008. As a result, thousands of small businesses with peak seasons in late spring and summer will be locked out of the visa process. Many landscaping businesses, resorts, restaurants, carnivals, tourism industries, and other seasonal businesses will not have enough workers to meet their needs. Some businesses have already closed their doors.

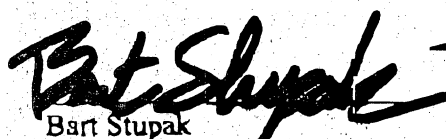
H-2B workers and returning workers in particular have provided relief to the tourism industry, seafood processors, landscapers, resorts, pool companies, carnivals and other small and seasonal businesses across the nation. Reaching the second H-2B cap for fiscal year 2008 in January highlights the immediate need to extend the returning worker program to help these businesses fill their seasonal labor needs and keep full-time Americans working.

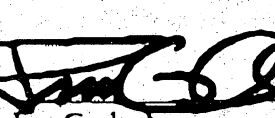
Without an immediate extension of the returning worker program, businesses will face labor shortages and increased economic hardship this year. While Congress is working on legislative options, we respectfully request that you, as President, use your Executive Authority to direct the Departments of

Homeland Security and Labor to continue the H-2B returning worker program as outlined in the 2005 legislation.

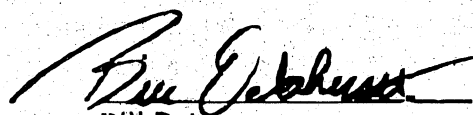
We look forward to your prompt reply to this request. If you have any questions, please contact Josephine Eckert with Congressman Bart Stupak's office at (202) 225-4735 or Erin Corcoran with Senator Barbara Mikulski's office at (202) 224-4654.

Sincerely,

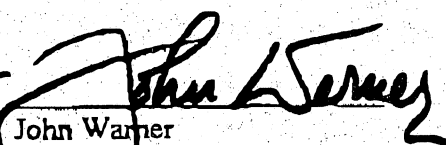

Bart Stupak
Member of Congress


Jim Gerlach
Member of Congress

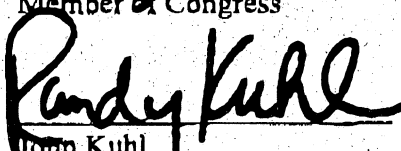

Barbara A. Mikulski
U.S. Senator


Bill Delahunt
Member of Congress

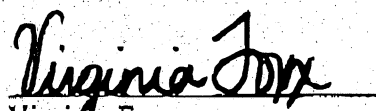

Henry Brown
Member of Congress

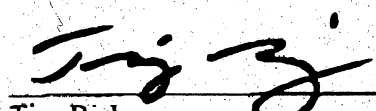

John Warner
U.S. Senator

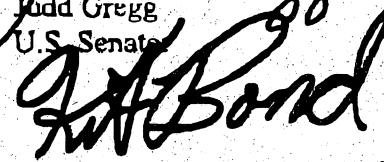

Donald Payne
Member of Congress

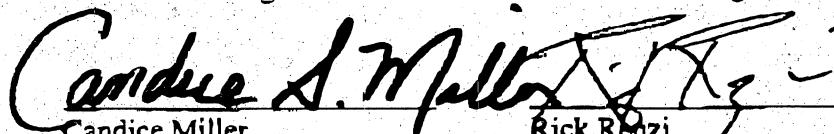

Tom Kuhl
Member of Congress

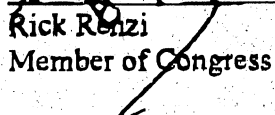

Judd Gregg
U.S. Senator

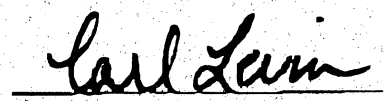

Virginia Foxx
Member of Congress


Tim Bishop
Member of Congress

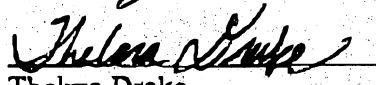

Christopher S. Bond
U.S. Senator

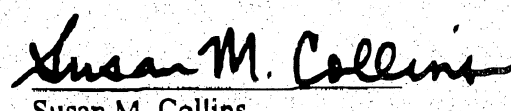

Candice Miller
Member of Congress

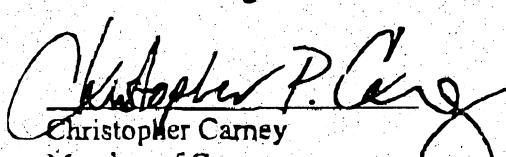

Rick Renzi
Member of Congress

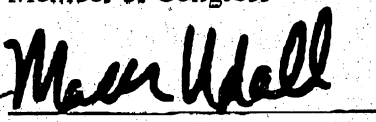

Carl Levin
U.S. Senator


Madeleine Bordallo
Member of Congress

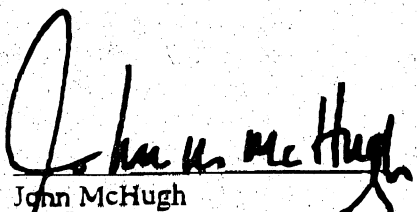

Thelma Drake
Member of Congress

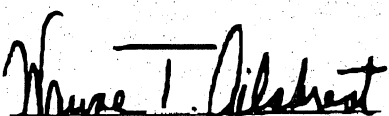

Susan M. Collins
U.S. Senator

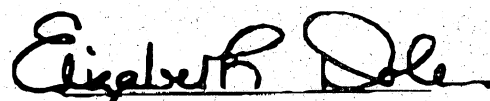

Christopher Carney
Member of Congress

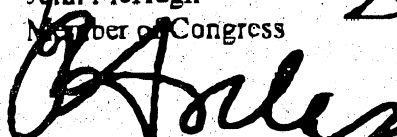

Mark Udall
Member of Congress

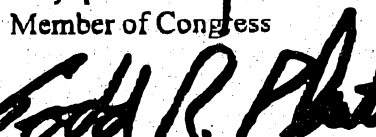

Norm Coleman
U.S. Senator

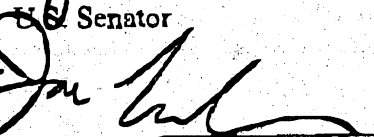

 John McHugh
 Member of Congress


 Wayne Gilchrest
 Member of Congress

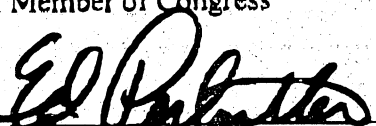

 Elizabeth Dole
 U.S. Senator

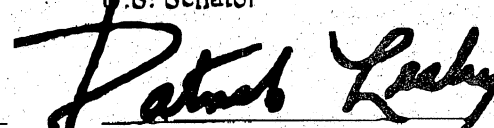

 Paul Hodes
 Member of Congress

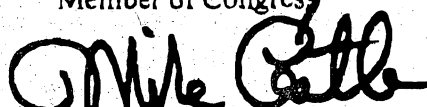

 Todd Platts
 Member of Congress


 Joseph I. Lieberman
 U.S. Senator

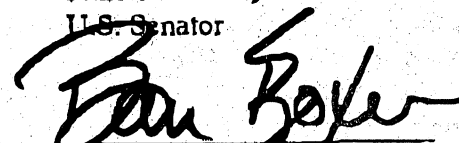

 Rodney Alexander
 Member of Congress

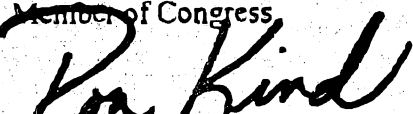

 Ed Perlmutter
 Member of Congress


 Patrick J. Leahy
 U.S. Senator


 Michael Castle
 Member of Congress


 Tom Allen
 Member of Congress


 Barbara Boxer
 U.S. Senator

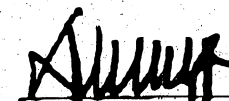

 Ron Kind
 Member of Congress

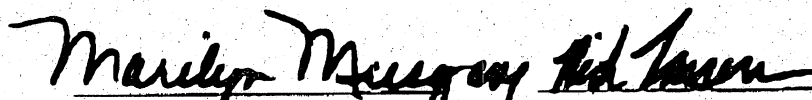

 Joe Sestak
 Member of Congress


 Wayne Allard
 U.S. Senator

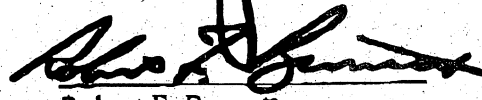

 Joe Wilson
 Member of Congress

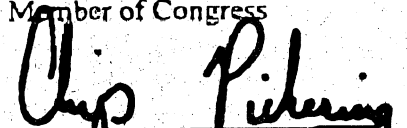

 Carol Shca-Porter
 Member of Congress


 Daniel K. Inouye
 U.S. Senator

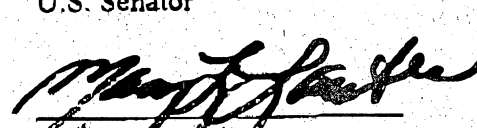

 Marilyn Musgrave
 Member of Congress


 Rick Larsen
 Member of Congress

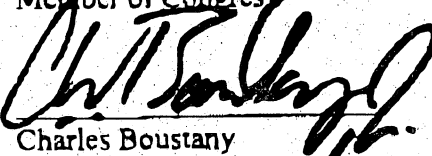

 Robert F. Bennett
 U.S. Senator

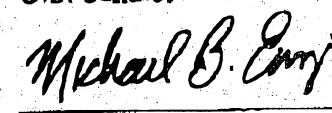

 Charles Pickering
 Member of Congress


 Rob Bishop
 Member of Congress


 Mary L. Landrieu
 U.S. Senator

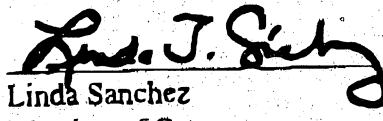

 Wm Lacy Clay
 Member of Congress


 Charles Boustany
 Member of Congress

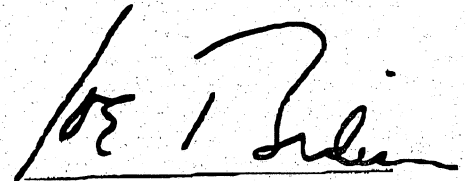

 Michael B. Enzi
 U.S. Senator



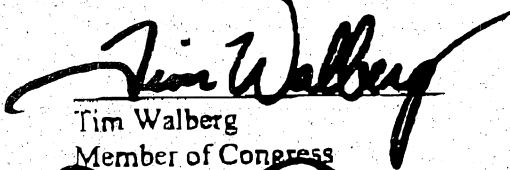
Steven Rothman
Member of Congress



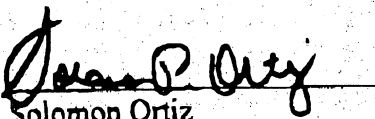
Linda Sanchez
Member of Congress



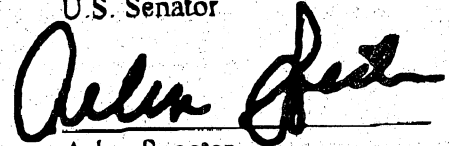
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
U.S. Senator



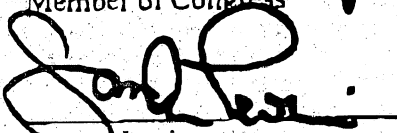
Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



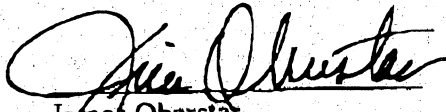
Solomon Ortiz
Member of Congress



Arlen Specter
U.S. Senator



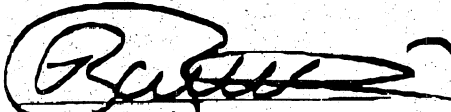
Sander Levin
Member of Congress



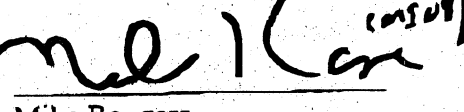
James Oberstar
Member of Congress



Ted Stevens
U.S. Senator



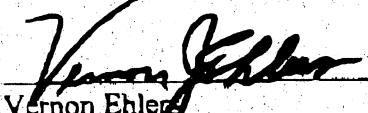
Roscoe Bartlett
Member of Congress



Mike Rogers
Member of Congress



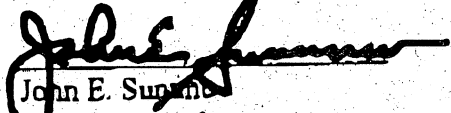
Benjamin L. Cardin
U.S. Senator



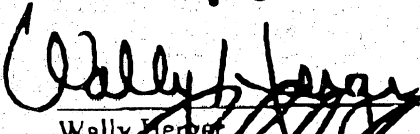
Vernon Ehlers
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



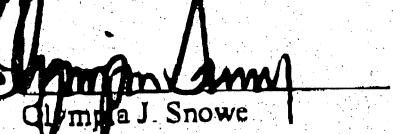
John E. Sununu
U.S. Senator



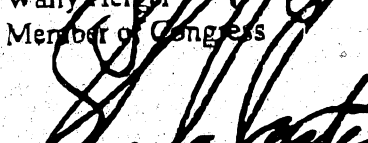
Wally Herger
Member of Congress



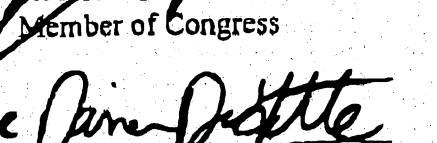
Robert Whitman
Member of Congress



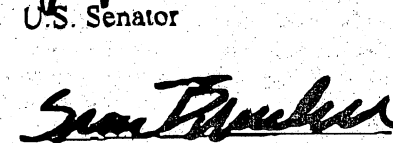
Olympia J. Snowe
U.S. Senator



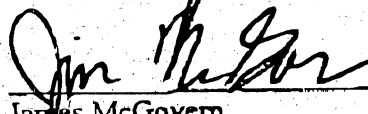
Sheila Jackson-Lee
Member of Congress



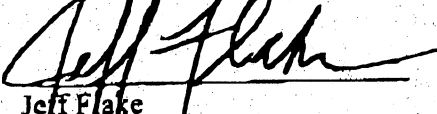
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



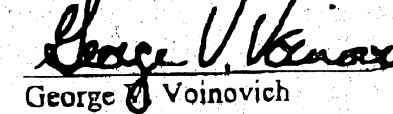
Sam Brownback
U.S. Senator



James McGovern
Member of Congress



Jeff Flake
Member of Congress



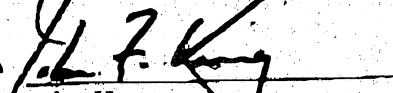
George V. Voinovich
U.S. Senator



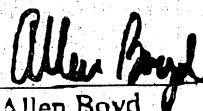
Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



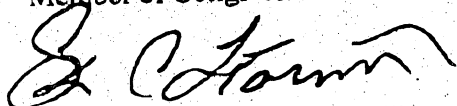
Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



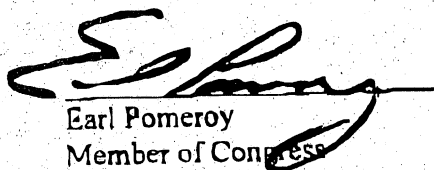
John Kerry
U.S. Senator



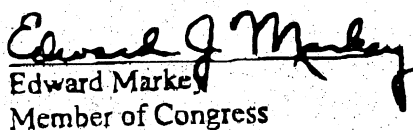
Allen Boyd
Member of Congress



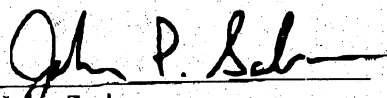
Steven LaTourette
Member of Congress



Earl Pomeroy
Member of Congress



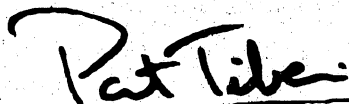
Edward Markey
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes
Member of Congress



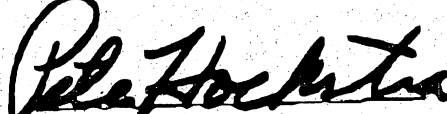
Barbara Cubin
Member of Congress



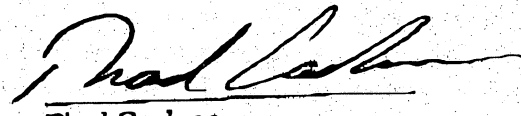
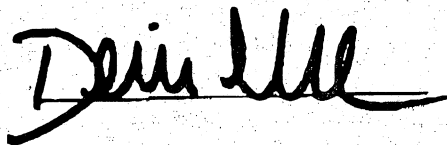
Patrick Tiberi
Member of Congress



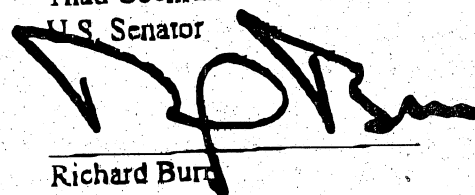
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



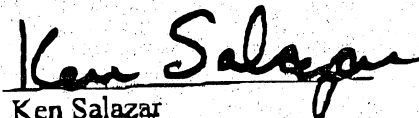
Pete Hoekstra
Member of Congress



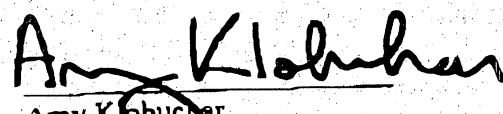
Thad Cochran
U.S. Senator



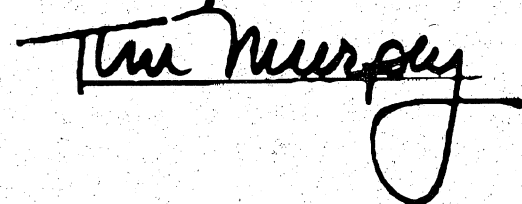
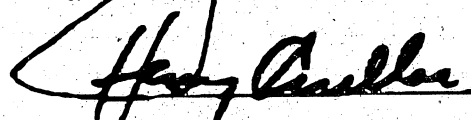
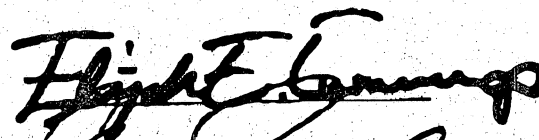
Richard Burr
U.S. Senator



Ken Salazar
U.S. Senator



Amy Klobuchar
U.S. Senator



Cc: The Honorable Michael Chertoff, Secretary of Homeland Security
The Honorable Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Labor

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2008

Dear Mr. President:

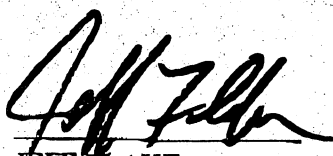
We write to urge you to veto any Farm Bill reauthorization conference report that funds agriculture programs by raising taxes, fails to substantively reform current U.S. farm programs, and is not fiscally responsible.

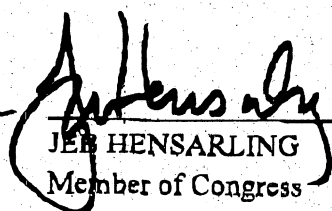
Your Administration has made clear that continuing the status quo in our domestic farm policy is unacceptable, especially given both the strength of the U.S. farm economy for the foreseeable future and the need for trade compliance. As a result of the hard work of U.S. farmers and ranchers, they are enjoying historically low debt-to-asset ratios, consistently high cash receipts and robust farm export values. With reports of strong prices for program crops likely for at least the next several years, the strength of the U.S. farm sector is unlikely to fade any time soon.

We owe it to farmers and ranchers across the nation to promote policies, such as repealing the Death Tax, expanding U.S. agricultural export opportunities abroad, and increasing production of American sources of energy, that will support U.S. agriculture's competitiveness and continue to move U.S. agriculture policy in a positive direction that supports family farms. However, the House and Senate versions of the Farm Bill move U.S. agriculture policy in the opposite direction. Both versions in conference finance billions in new spending with various tax increases, expand or add new unnecessary farm programs, lack the reforms your Administration has identified as necessary and include numerous trade distorting provisions that would jeopardize existing U.S. trade agreements. In particular, rather than reduce spending in lower priority farm programs, the House and the Senate bills include tax increases that could escalate the tax burden on taxpayers by \$4 billion or more than \$16 billion, respectively. Increasing taxes will harm the economy, and is a particularly bad idea with the increasing evidence that the economy may be weakening.

We support your opposition to Farm Bill provisions that will send U.S. agriculture in the wrong direction and harm the economy instead of reflecting 21st Century farm sector needs and realities. We strongly urge you to veto any Farm Bill conference report that increases taxes on Americans, lacks reforms, distorts trade and fails the test of fiscal restraint.

Sincerely,


JEFF FLAKE
Member of Congress


JEFF HENSARLING
Member of Congress


PAUL RYAN
Member of Congress

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

January 28, 2008

The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

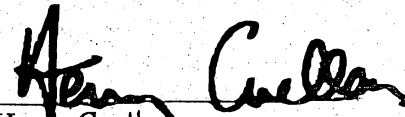
Dear Mr. President:

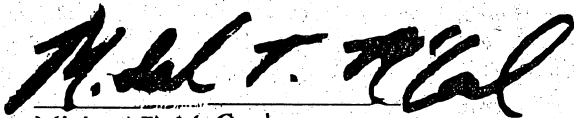
We recently traveled to Mexico as part of a House Committee on Homeland Security Congressional Delegation to discuss security cooperation with senior Mexican government officials. The Calderon Administration has taken broad security measures to combat increasing violence that is destabilizing their government and undermining the rule of law. The effects of drug and alien smuggling, money laundering, and the illegal importation weapons into Mexico, if left unchecked, may negatively impact our border security and interior enforcement efforts. We are pleased to report our meetings left us with a favorable impression of the commitment made by the leadership of Mexico who are quite literally putting their lives on the line to reign in the criminal organizations operating in Mexico.

While in Mexico, we had meetings with state and local officials in Matamoros who explained the challenges they are facing in providing a secure environment for their citizens and reinforced their desire to receive US assistance so they can work cooperatively on border security. In our meetings in Mexico City, we met with Mexican federal officials, including President Calderon, Defense Secretary Galvan and Attorney General Mora, who highlighted the significant efforts already underway to control the drug cartels and improve internal security. For example, it was during our meeting with Attorney General Mora that he informed us of the capture of Alfredo Beltran Leyva, a top lieutenant in the Sinaloa drug cartel. President Calderon has taken unprecedented steps in attacking the drug cartels, including sending 30,000 federal troops to patrol the Border States in Mexico. These actions show a willingness by a Mexican president to address the problem that no previous administration has shown.

We believe your efforts with Mexican President Calderon to develop a cooperative security package is timely and has the potential to provide a level of synergy which will significantly enhance our National Strategy for Homeland Security. We look forward to working with our Mexican colleagues in helping to improve security along the U.S.-Mexico border by stemming the tide of drugs and illegal immigration into our country. We would appreciate an opportunity to share our findings with you and your staff at your convenience.

Sincerely


Henry Cuellar
Member of Congress


Michael T. McCaul
Member of Congress