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

December 16, 2011

Secretary Hilda Solis
Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20210

Dear Secretary Solis:

We are writing to express our opposition to the Department of Labor's proposal to make it more difficult for farmers and ranchers to hire youth to work in agriculture (**RIN 1235-AA06**). As written, these regulations would be overly burdensome to agriculture producers and would punish an industry that has made significant gains in the safety of its younger workers over the last several decades. The safety of all workers is of utmost importance, but these regulations are harmful to the way agriculture has been practiced in the United States for generations.

Training the next generation of farmers and ranchers is necessary to ensuring a stable food supply for our nation. If we do not encourage participation in agriculture from an early age, we will have fewer and fewer young people staying to work on farms and ranches. This proposal would also be detrimental to young Americans who want to participate in FFA and 4-H programs, getting hands-on experience in agriculture.

Additionally, the way in which the regulation is currently written changes the traditional definition of a family farm. We are seriously concerned that the family farm exemption included in the regulation will not apply to the many family farms that are partly owned by a grandparent, aunt, or uncle. Despite the Department's claim that the rule will not be interpreted to exclude arrangements in which multiple family members own shares in an agricultural operation, the wording of the proposal will leave this administration or future administrations the ability to exclude many family farms from the exemption to this proposal. For tax and estate purposes, family farms and ranches use a variety of legal structures in order to remain financially viable. These arrangements do not change the fact that they are a family farm by any reasonable definition.

We have heard from many of our constituents expressing their opposition to this proposal, and are seriously concerned with the effect this would have on American agriculture. The Department of Labor must not hinder the ability of America's farmers and ranchers to supply food for our nation and provide jobs during this difficult economic climate.

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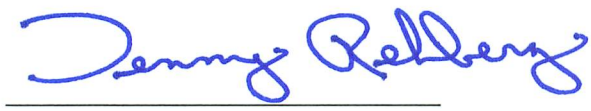
Thank you for your consideration, and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



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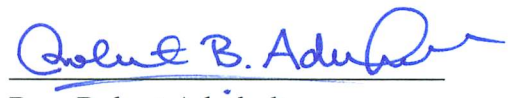

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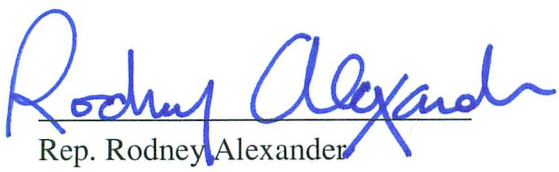

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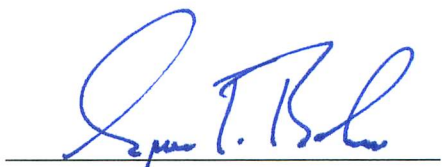

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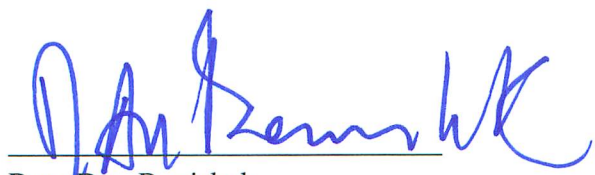

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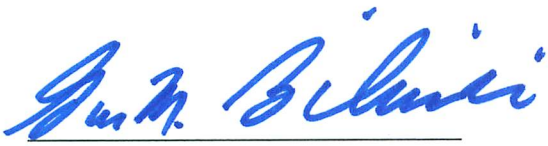

Rep. Gus Bilirakis
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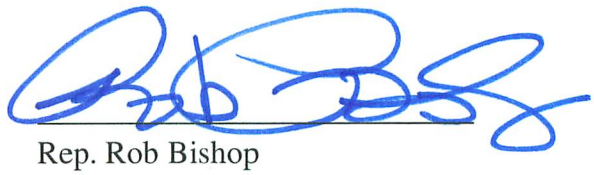

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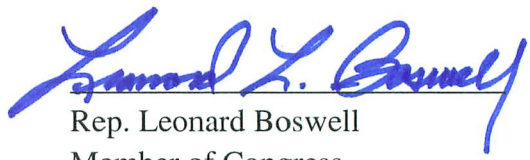

Rep. Leonard Boswell
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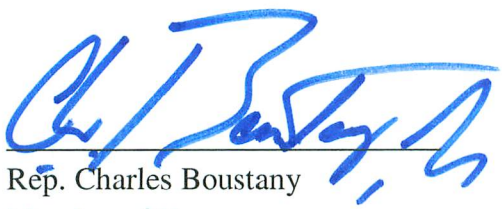

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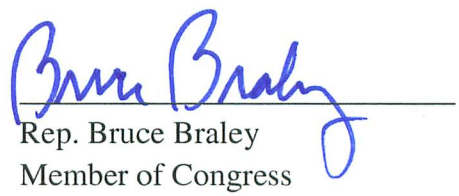

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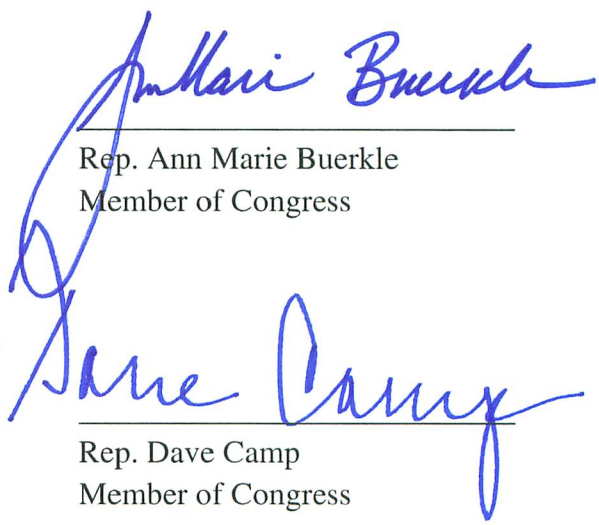

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Rep. Dan Burton
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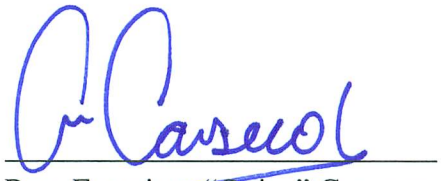

Rep. Francisco "Quico" Canseco
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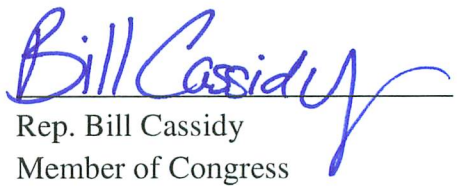

Rep. Bill Cassidy
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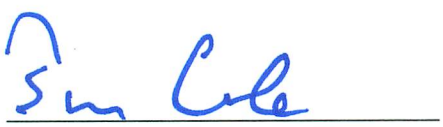

Rep. Tom Cole
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Rep. Michael Conaway
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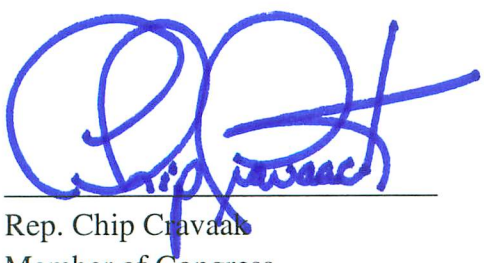

Rep. Chip Cravaack
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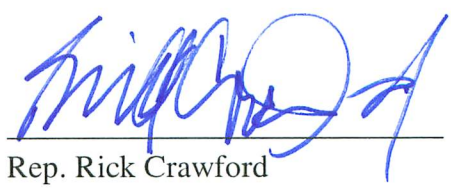

Rep. Rick Crawford
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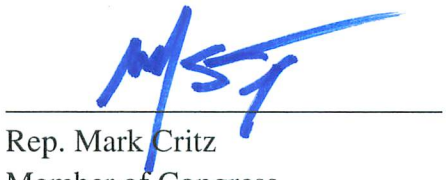

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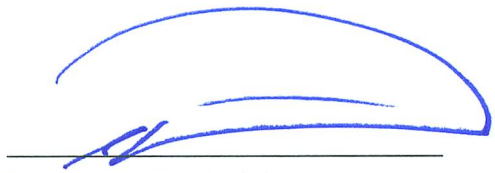

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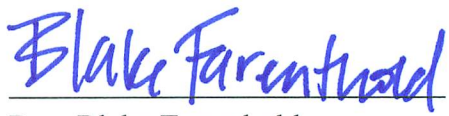

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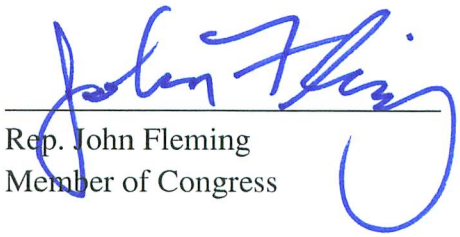

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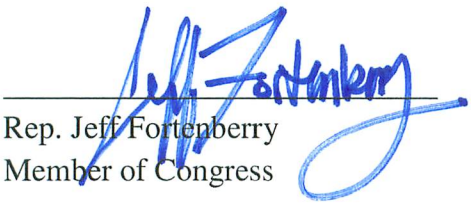

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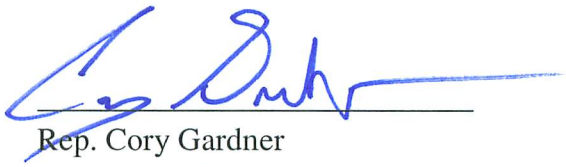

Rep. Cory Gardner
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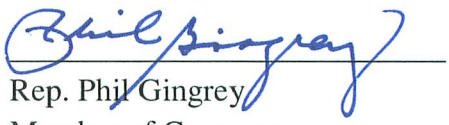

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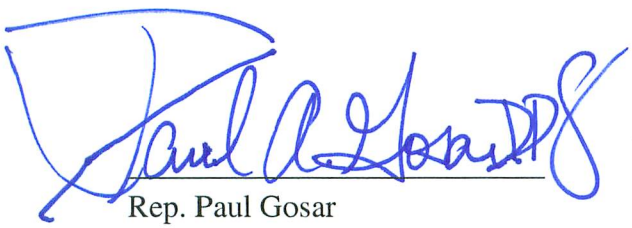

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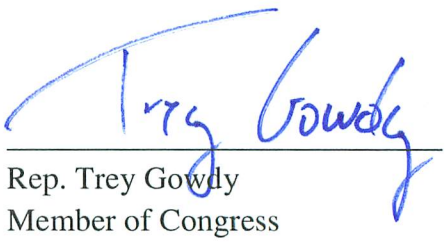

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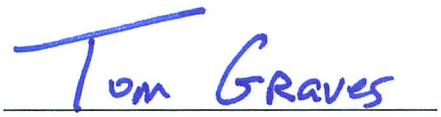

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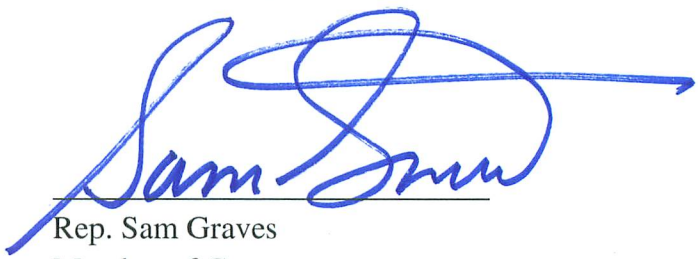

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Rep. Bill Huizenga
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Rep. Lynn Jenkins
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Rep. Bill Johnson
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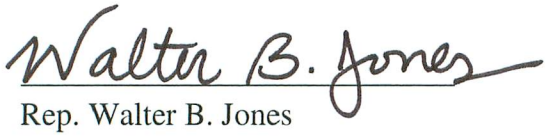

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Rep. Mike Kelly
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Rep. Adam Kinzinger
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Rep. Larry Kissell
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Rep. John Kline
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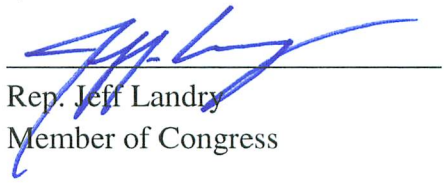

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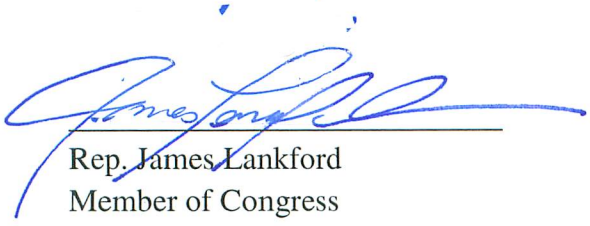

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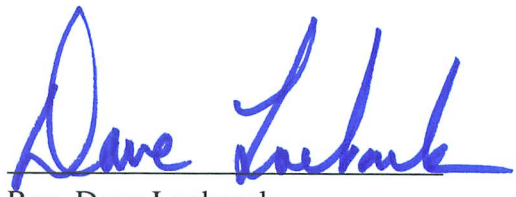

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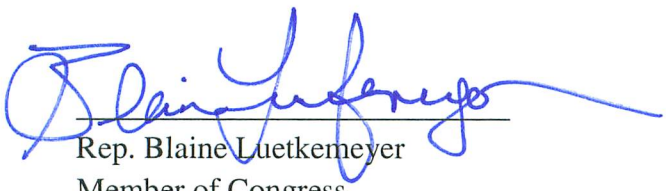
Member of Congress



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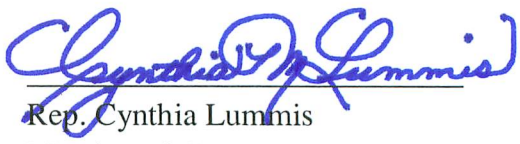

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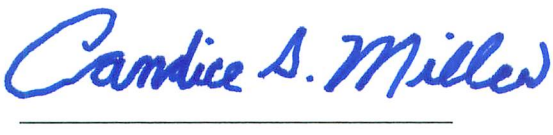

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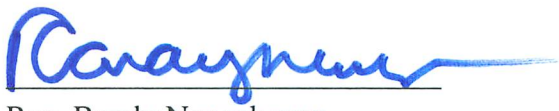

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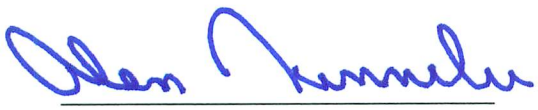

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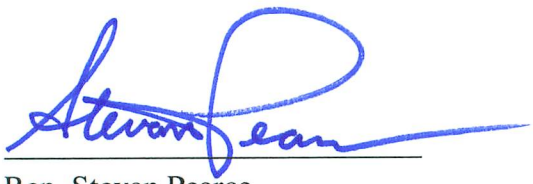

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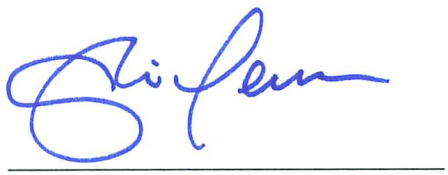

Rep. Mike Pence
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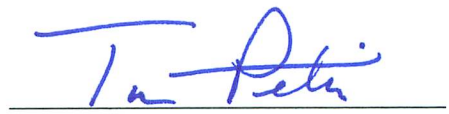
Member of Congress



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Rep. Ted Poe
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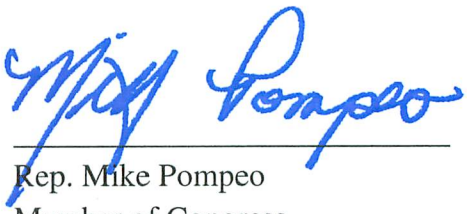

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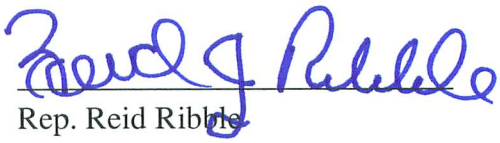

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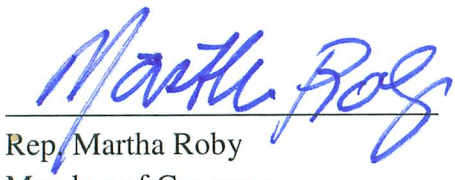

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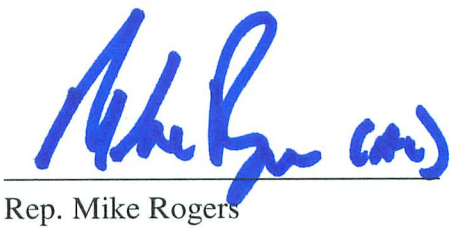
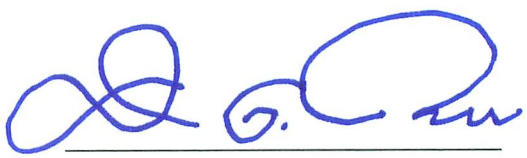
Rep. Phil Roe
Member of Congress

Rep. Hal Rogers
Member of Congress



Rep. Mike Rogers
Member of Congress

Rep. Todd Rokita
Member of Congress



Rep. Dennis Ross
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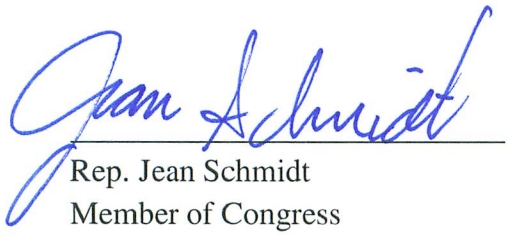
Rep. Mike Ross
Member of Congress

Rep. Steve Scalise
Member of Congress



Rep. Jean Schmidt
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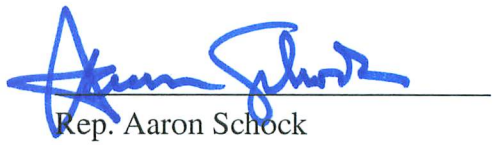
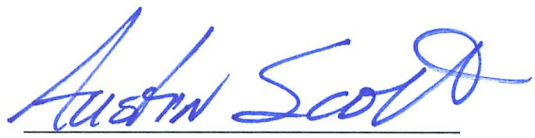


Rep. Aaron Schock
Member of Congress

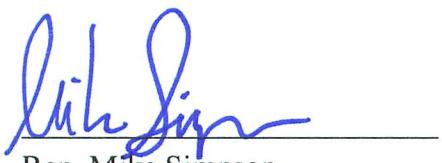
Rep. Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress



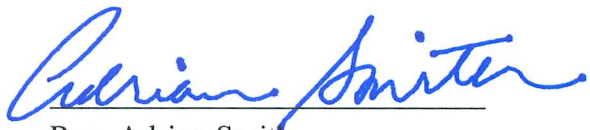
Rep. Austin Scott
Member of Congress

Rep. John Shimkus
Member of Congress

Rep. Bill Shuster
Member of Congress



Rep. Mike Simpson
Member of Congress

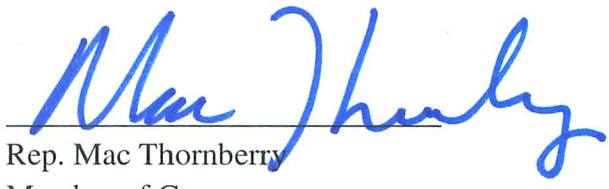


Rep. Adrian Smith
Member of Congress

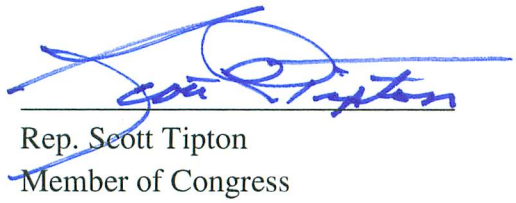
Rep. Steve Stivers
Member of Congress

Rep. Marlin Stutzman
Member of Congress

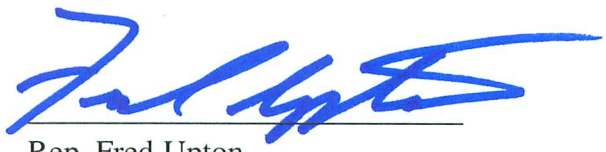
Rep. Glenn Thompson
Member of Congress



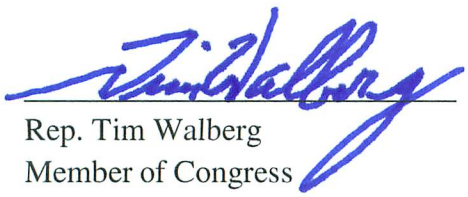
Rep. Mac Thornberry
Member of Congress



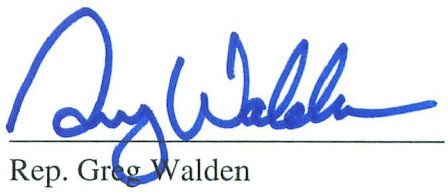
Rep. Scott Tipton
Member of Congress



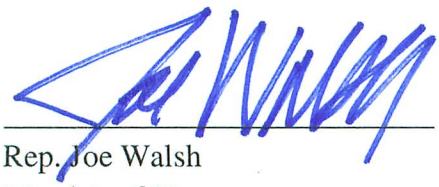
Rep. Fred Upton
Member of Congress



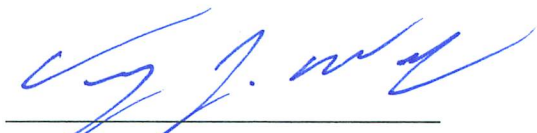
Rep. Tim Walberg
Member of Congress



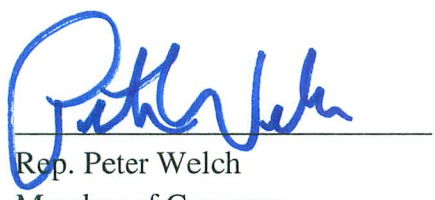
Rep. Greg Walden
Member of Congress



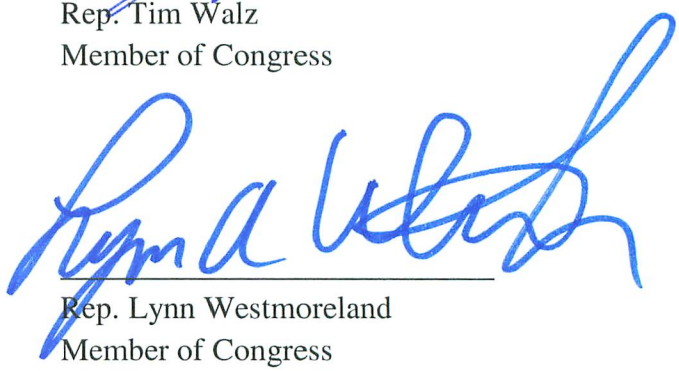
Rep. Joe Walsh
Member of Congress



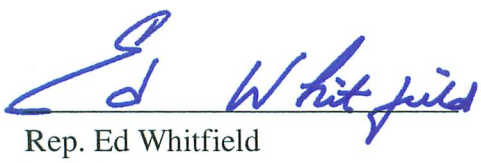
Rep. Tim Walz
Member of Congress



Rep. Peter Welch
Member of Congress

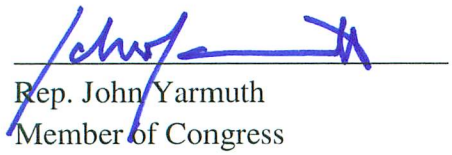


Rep. Lynn Westmoreland
Member of Congress

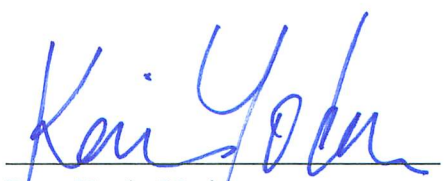


Rep. Ed Whitfield
Member of Congress

Rep. Steve Womack
Member of Congress



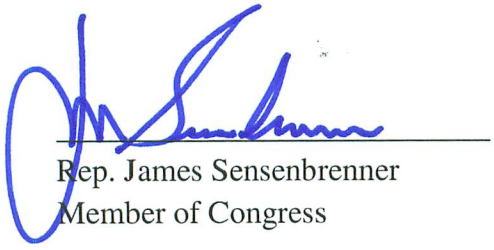
Rep. John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



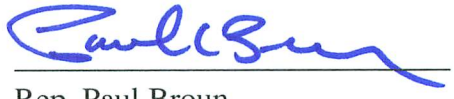
Rep. Kevin Yoder
Member of Congress

Rep. Robert Hurt
Member of Congress

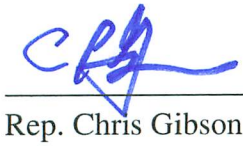
Rep. Kristi Noem
Member of Congress



Rep. James Sensenbrenner
Member of Congress



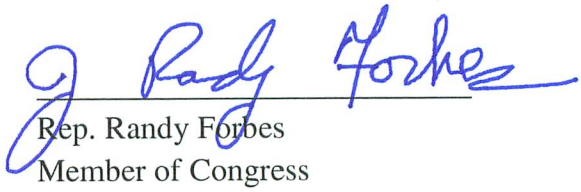
Rep. Paul Broun
Member of Congress



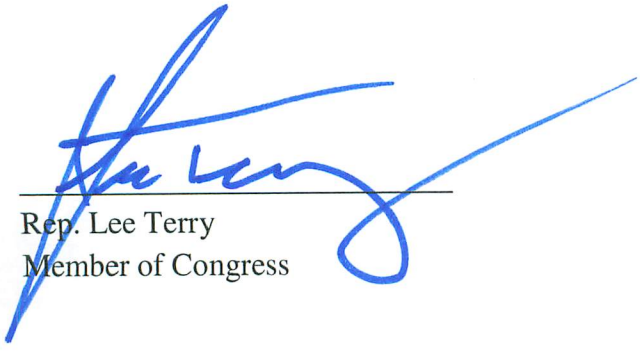
Rep. Chris Gibson
Member of Congress

Rep. Bob Goodlatte
Member of Congress

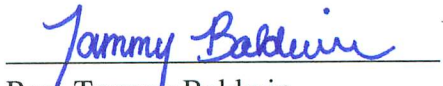
Rep. Bill Flores
Member of Congress



Rep. Randy Forbes
Member of Congress



Rep. Lee Terry
Member of Congress



Rep. Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

Rep. Dave Reichert
Member of Congress