

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

November 13, 2014

Dear Mr. President:

It is most unfortunate that Republican leaders in the House refused to allow a vote on the bipartisan immigration reform bill the Senate passed last year. Even today, if Republican leaders allowed a vote, the bill would pass. But they won't.

When Republicans blocked legislation, your pledge to use Presidential power under existing law to improve our immigration system gave us hope. Without such changes, our economy will continue to suffer and families in our communities will continue to be torn apart.

Although we were very disappointed when you postponed action until after the November election, we were encouraged last week when you reaffirmed your promise to act before the end of the year.

We hope that your actions will prevent the separation of undocumented family members of U.S. citizens, lawful permanent residents, and DACA beneficiaries and offer protection to others who have long worked in the United States and have established strong ties with our communities. We similarly hope that you will recognize that undocumented farmworkers are “essential for agriculture” and that our country would benefit greatly if they were permitted to work in our fields without fear. We further hope that you will reform our immigration enforcement efforts to make them more sensible and humane.

Bold and meaningful executive action will provide a boost to our national and local economies. It will strengthen communities and promote family unity. It will help the government focus limited enforcement resources on those who pose a true danger to the public. And by providing an opportunity for millions of undocumented immigrants to register with the government—provide detailed biographic information, undergo criminal background checks, demonstrate continuing compliance with tax laws—it will protect American and immigrant workers alike by reducing the threat of exploitation and abuse.

The legal authority for taking executive action is clear and substantial. Just two years ago, the Supreme Court under Chief Justice John Roberts reaffirmed that the administration retains “broad discretion” to decide “whether it makes sense to pursue removal at all.” *Arizona v. United States*, 132 S.Ct. 2492, 2499 (2012). And executive action in this area is anything but unprecedented. In fact, every past President starting from President Dwight D. Eisenhower more than half a century ago has used such authority when dealing with similar issues regarding the national interest.

Like us, you have heard Republicans warn that any actions you take will “poison the well” and prevent them from using their upcoming majority in the Senate to address our broken immigration system. However, for the past two years it was not Senate Democrats that blocked much-needed legislation, it was House Republicans. That obstacle to sensible immigration reform still remains. Let us also not forget that congressional Republicans previously blocked reform in 2006 and 2007.

As you said last week, “What we can’t do is just keep on waiting. There’s a cost for waiting.” That cost is measured in the tens of thousands of parents of U.S. citizen children who are deported each year. It is measured in the emotional price children and DACA recipients pay worrying about whether their parents will come home at the end of the day. Our national security suffers whenever we spend precious enforcement resources on hardworking immigrant families, rather than on criminals and those who mean our communities harm. And American workers’ wages and working conditions are consistently undermined as long as millions of immigrant workers are working in the shadows and off the books. We agree with you, Mr. President. We can no longer afford to wait.

As you have said, it is ultimately the job of Congress to reform our broken immigration system by enacting legislation. But by failing to do their job—and repeatedly interfering with your efforts to do your job—congressional Republicans threaten to take our immigration system hostage and preserve a status quo that everyone agrees is unacceptable. Their failure to act must not inhibit your commitment to governing.

We will stand with you as you take bold and meaningful action, consistent with existing law and historical precedent, to protect American families, strengthen local communities and grow the economy.

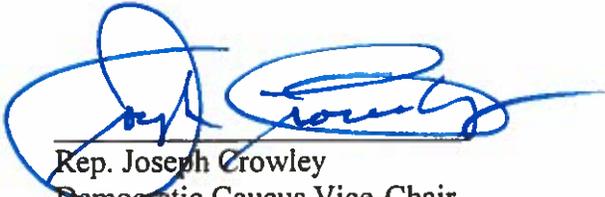
Sincerely,



Rep. Steny Hoyer
Minority Whip



Rep. James E. Clyburn
Assistant Leader



Rep. Joseph Crowley
Democratic Caucus Vice-Chair



Rep. Diana DeGette
Chief Deputy Whip



Rep. Rubén Hinojosa
Chair, Congressional Hispanic Caucus



Rep. Judy Chu
Chair, Congressional Asian Pacific
American Caucus



Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus



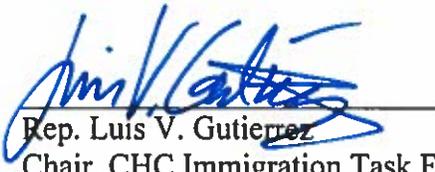
Rep. Keith Ellison
Co-Chair, Congressional Progressive Caucus



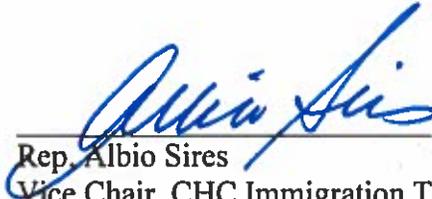
Rep. John Conyers, Jr.
Ranking Member, Committee on the Judiciary



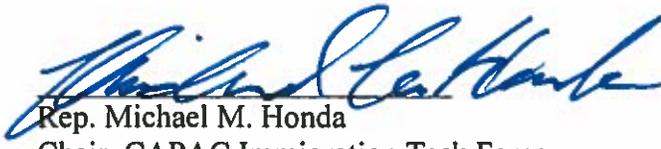
Rep. Zoe Lofgren
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Immigration and Border Security



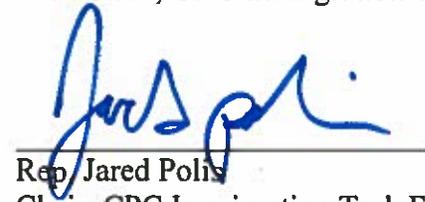
Rep. Luis V. Gutierrez
Chair, CHC Immigration Task Force



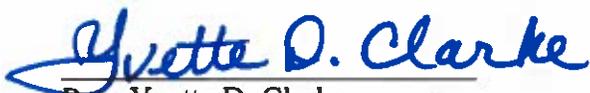
Rep. Albio Sires
Vice Chair, CHC Immigration Task Force



Rep. Michael M. Honda
Chair, CAPAC Immigration Task Force



Rep. Jared Polis
Chair, CPC Immigration Task Force



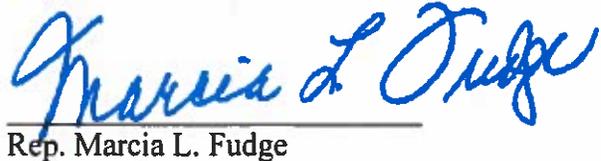
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Rep. Karen Bass



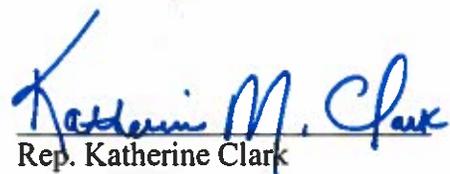
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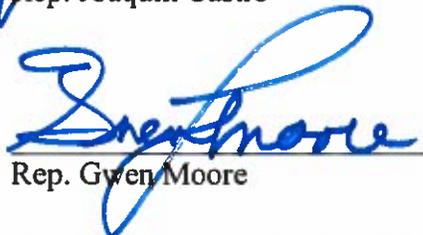
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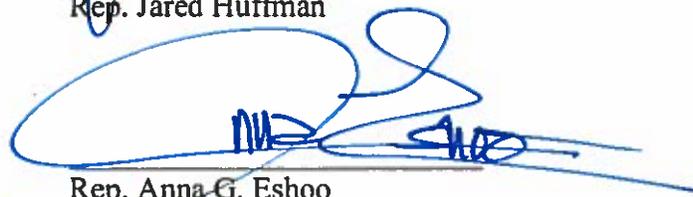
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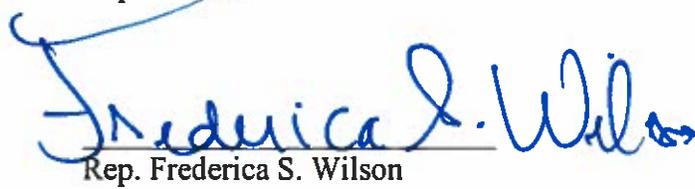
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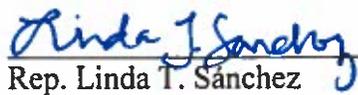
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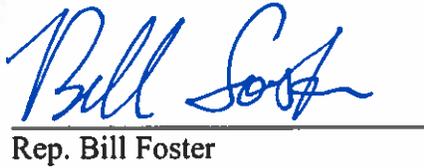
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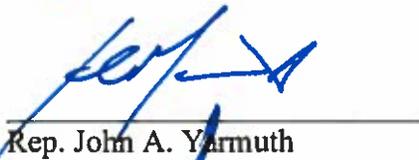

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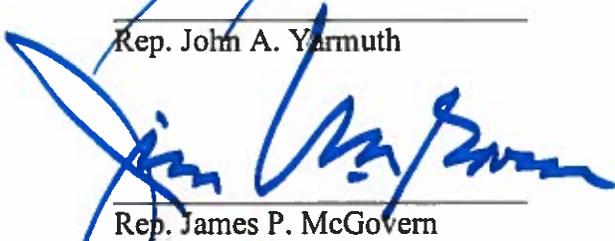

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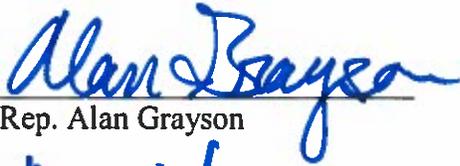

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Rep. Donald M. Payne, Jr.



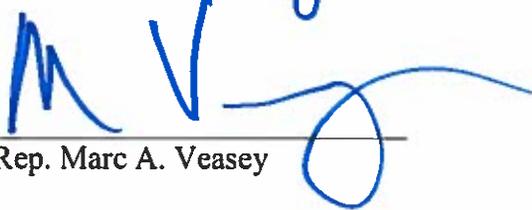
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Rep. Marc A. Veasey



Rep. Dina Titus



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Rep. Tammy Duckworth



Rep. Nydia M. Velázquez



Rep. Jim Costa



Rep. Robin Kelly



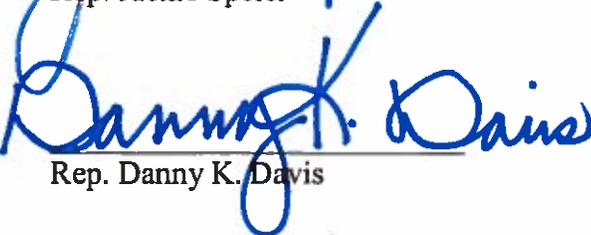
Rep. Janice Hahn



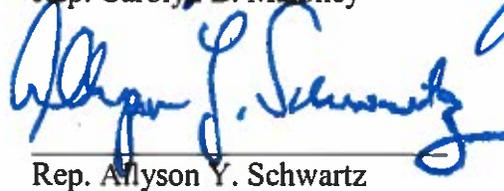
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Rep. Carolyn B. Maloney



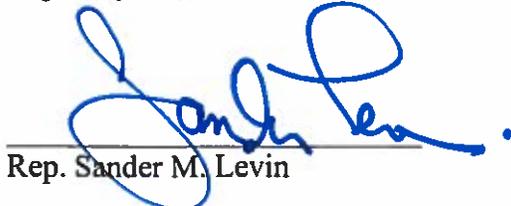
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Rep. Sander M. Levin

Rush Holt

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Chaka Fattah

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Wm. Lacy Clay

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John B. Larson

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