

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 8, 2006

The Honorable Elaine Chao, Secretary
U.S. Department of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington, D.C. 20210

Dear Secretary Chao,

We are writing to express our concerns about the recently proposed plans to weaken the vital role of the Women's Bureau of the Department of Labor by significantly reducing the number of career positions in the Bureau's national office. We urge you to renew your support of this important agency.

As the only federal agency devoted solely to the concerns of women in the workplace for more than eighty years, the mission of the Women's Bureau is unique. As such, we believe that Women's Bureau positions are best filled by career staff, dedicated to the work of the Bureau with specialized knowledge of the issues facing women in the labor force and familiarity with the Bureau's history and mission. We are troubled to learn of your plan to outsource almost half of the career positions at the Women's Bureau's national office. If implemented, such action would result in a significant loss of institutional knowledge for the Women's Bureau and would considerably reduce the Bureau's effectiveness.

In addition, we have learned that as regional administrator positions have become vacant in the ten regional offices, these positions have not been filled – with remaining regional administrators currently managing more than one region. As you well know, the regional offices of the Bureau play a crucial role in ensuring that women across the nation are aware of their legal protections against potential abuses in the workplace, as well as provide key guidance to women seeking employment. Making regional administrators responsible for additional states undermines their ability to effectively perform this role by stretching their staff resources thin.

Secretary Chao, we all agree that improving the working conditions and expanding the number of opportunities for employment for all women are among the most critical responsibilities of the Department of Labor. In our judgment, weakening the capacity of the Women's Bureau to assist in this goal runs counter to this shared priority. That is why we respectfully ask that you reconsider the Department's proposed plan to outsource permanent positions at the Bureau and work toward filling any vacant positions at Bureau's regional offices.

We appreciate the work that the Department of Labor does to support America's working women, and we look forward to your leadership in ensuring that women are full participants in today's economy through the revitalization of the Women's Bureau. Thank you for your attention to this matter and we look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



ROSA L. DeLAURO
Member of Congress



HILDA L. SOLIS
Member of Congress



NANCY PELOSI
Democratic Leader



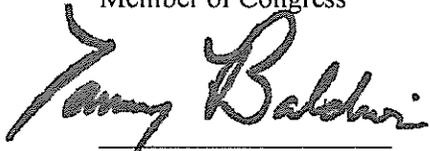
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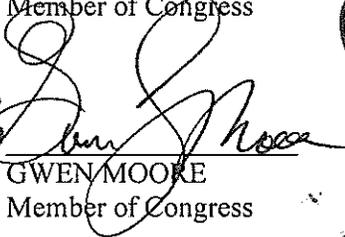
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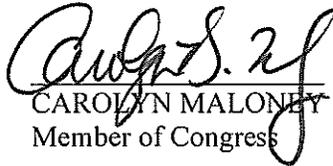
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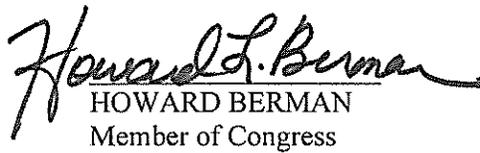
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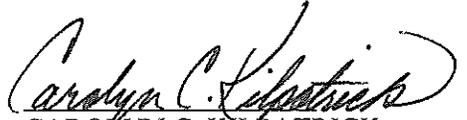
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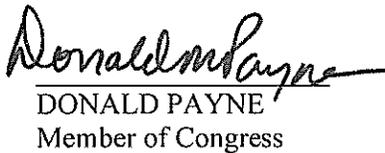
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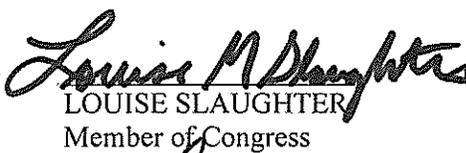
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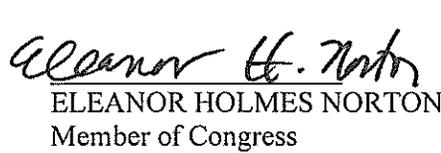
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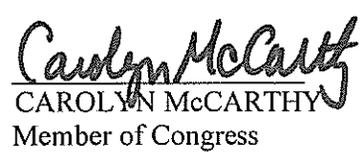
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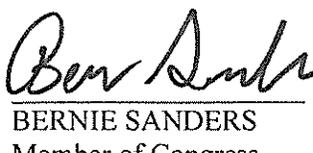
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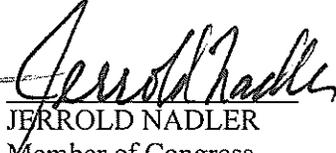
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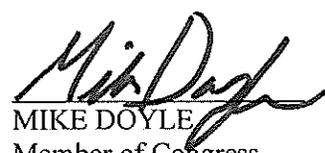
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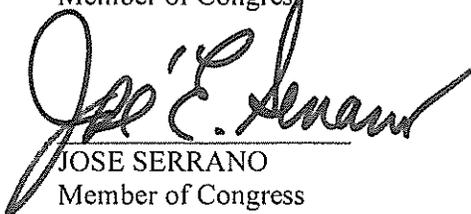
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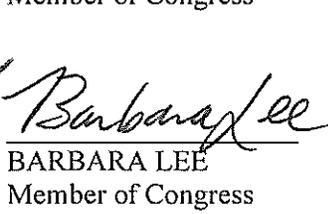
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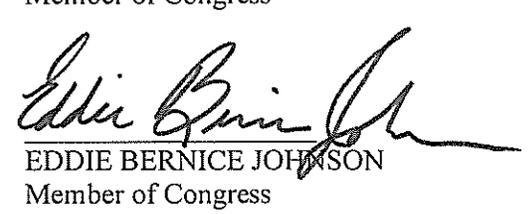
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