Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2014

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

The need for administrative relief, inclusive of policies that take into account the grave circumstances that LGBT immigrants face under our present, broken immigration system, grows more urgent with each passing day. We are disappointed in your decision to delay executive action on immigration, yet we remain hopeful that you will take prompt and bold action to provide relief for hundreds of thousands of LGBT individuals and their families who are suffering and whose future in our country remains uncertain due to unjust policies.

As strong supporters of comprehensive immigration reform legislation that includes a pathway to citizenship, we recognize that you alone do not have the power to implement the sweeping changes necessary to fully protect the lives and well-being of our nation's immigrant families. We cannot truly fix our broken immigration system if Congress will not send a comprehensive reform bill to your desk. Nevertheless, by exercising your power to implement administrative policies that take into account the uniquely dangerous and difficult circumstances facing LGBT immigrants, you have the ability to protect thousands of individuals immediately.

There are 267,000 LGBT immigrants living in the United States, and many of them came to this country to escape threats and extreme violence. These individuals are often seeking refuge from prejudice and persecution, but when they arrive in the United States, they encounter a complicated immigration system that can expose them to new risks and familial separation. Same-sex couples, who lack the freedom to marry in most parts of the country and the world, are routinely separated; LGBT people face gender-based violence in detention; and individuals are deported back to countries where their sexual orientation or gender identity puts their lives in grave peril. Deporting LGBT immigrants back to hostile countries is an unconscionable practice. Moreover, forcing them to return to their home countries in order to apply for permission to return with permanent status in the United States is completely unnecessary under current law.

The Department of Homeland Security's prosecutorial discretion policies have failed to implement a meaningful balancing test that properly weighs strong equities against negative factors, making at-risk LGBT immigrants much less likely to qualify for protection. We urge the administration to make better use of its limited resources by focusing its enforcement efforts on individuals who have records of violent criminal behavior rather than on those who do not. Many

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LGBT immigrants have struggled in the United States and have been pushed to the fringes of society. If given the opportunities made possible by deferred action, they will be able to thrive and contribute to the American economy like so many of the young people who already have obtained protection through the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals initiative.

We are dedicated to enacting legislation that fixes our broken immigration system and reflects our values as Americans and will continue to work with you and our colleagues to pass a comprehensive immigration reform bill. However, it is imperative that you use the tools at your disposal to ensure that families stay together, that immigrants are not put in harm's way, and that LGBT people are not subjected, at the hands of the American government, to the dangers from which they have fled.

Sincerely,

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

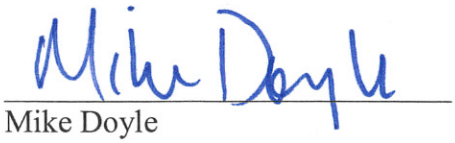
Michael E. Capuano
Member of Congress

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

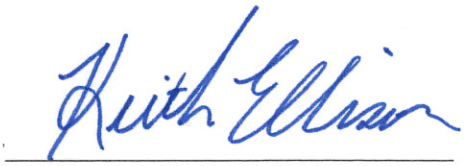
Judy Chu
Member of Congress

John Conyers
Member of Congress

Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



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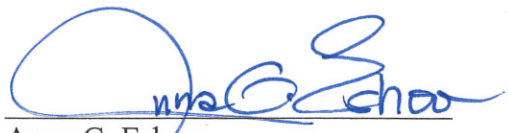

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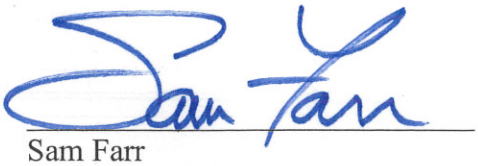

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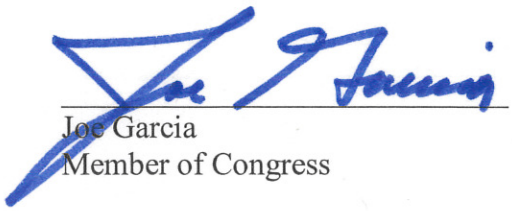
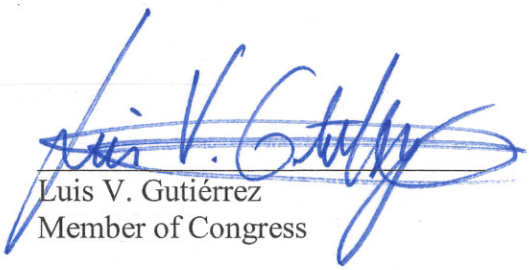


Joe Garcia
Member of Congress



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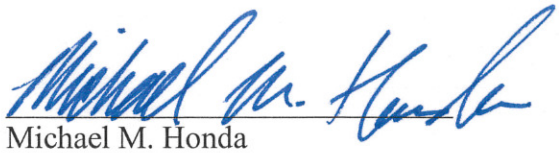

Michael M. Honda
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Barbara Lee
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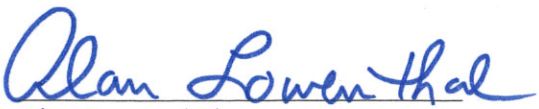

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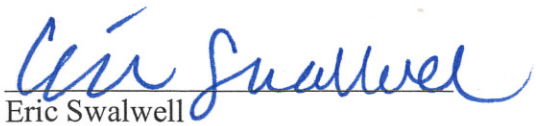

Eric Swalwell
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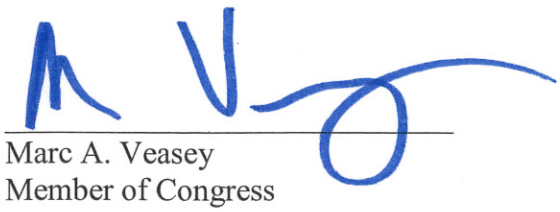
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
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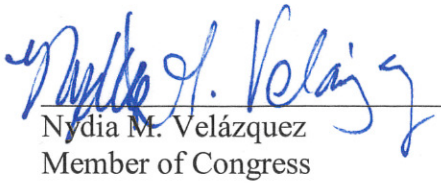

Nydia M. Velázquez
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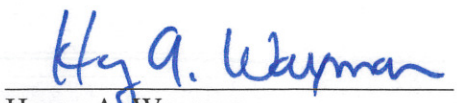

Henry A. Waxman
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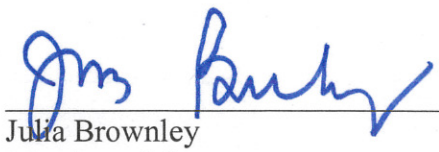

Julia Brownley
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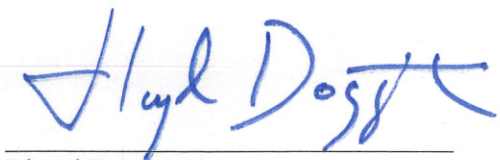
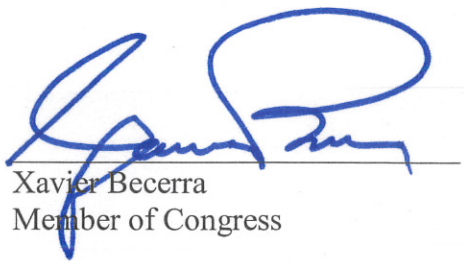


Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress