

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

July 20, 2010

The President
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

It has recently come to our attention that a rule governing the new health reform bill has been crafted which will prevent women with pre-existing conditions who receive coverage through the new high-risk insurance pools from accessing abortion coverage, even if they pay for it with their own money. The high-risk insurance pools were created to provide coverage for individuals who have been denied coverage because of a pre-existing condition until the insurance exchanges are functional in 2014. Unfortunately, this new rule means women with pre-existing conditions such as breast and ovarian cancer, MS, diabetes and AIDS will not have access to abortion coverage. Not even if they purchase the coverage with their own private funds.

Eighty-seven percent of private insurance plans include abortion care, and abortion is the most common surgical procedure women receive. Despite the widespread availability of reproductive health care, this rule bans abortion care from the high-risk pools and prevents women who happen to suffer from a pre-existing condition from accessing the same care available to their peers.

This ban is particularly harmful to women with pre-existing conditions, because it is these women who are most vulnerable to high-risk pregnancies that could result in the need for an abortion. State high-risk pools have long recognized this reality and many already include abortion as a covered service. The federally administered high-risk pools should be no different.

Despite claims to the contrary, this rule does not maintain the status quo, which forbids federal funds from going toward abortion services. Rather, this rule goes beyond the status quo and says that women who access care in the high-risk pools cannot purchase abortion coverage with their own private dollars. We would like to urge you in conjunction with the Department of Health and Human Services to reexamine the rule and consider revising it to ensure women who receive coverage in the new high-risk pools are able to access abortion coverage with their private funds.

Thank you for considering our concerns. Please contact Robyn Russell in my office (robyn.russell@mail.house.gov; 225-4061) should you have any questions.

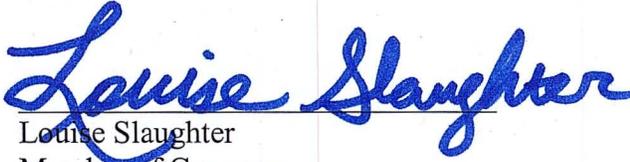
Sincerely,



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress



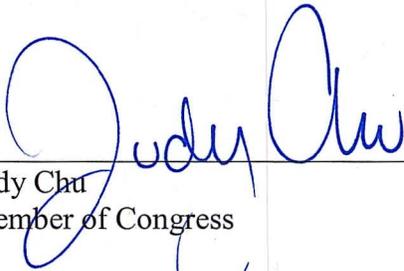
Brian Baird
Member of Congress



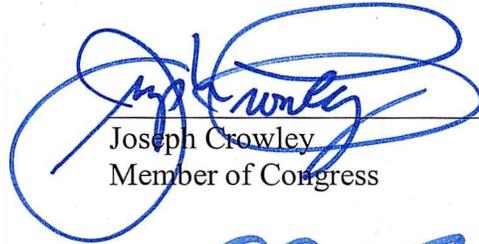
Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress



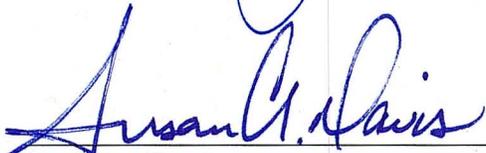
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



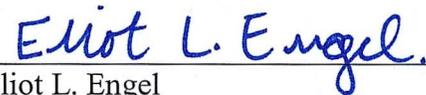
Susan A. Davis
Member of Congress



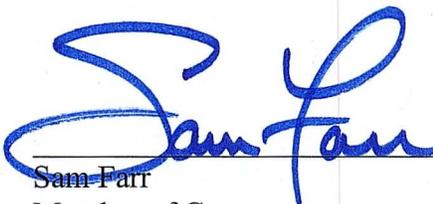
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress

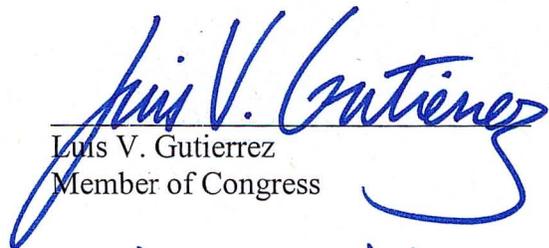


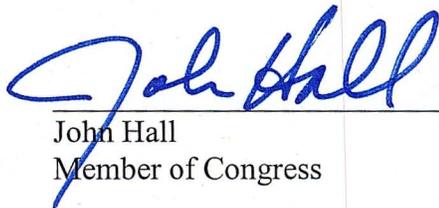
Sam Farr
Member of Congress



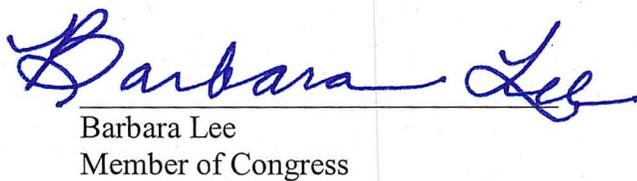
Gene Green
Member of Congress

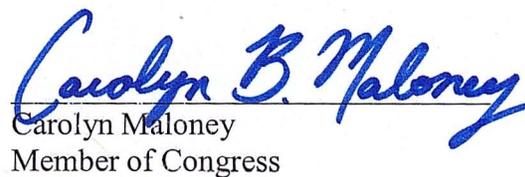

Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress

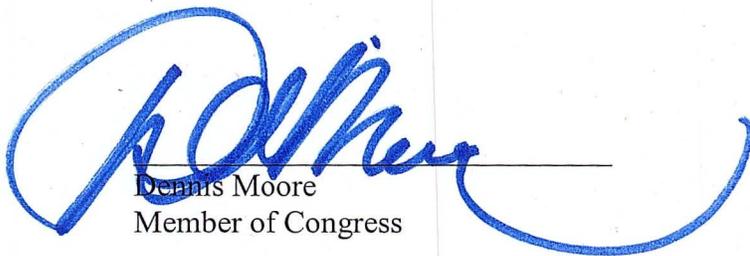

Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress

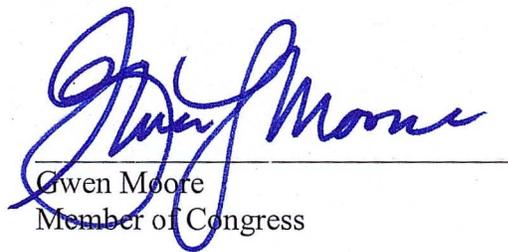

John Hall
Member of Congress


Jane Harman
Member of Congress

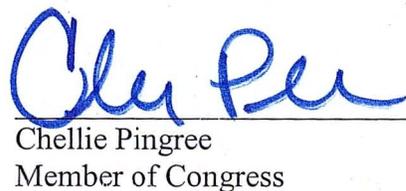

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

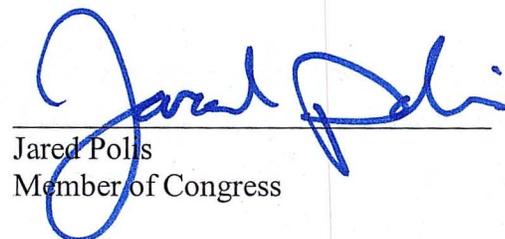

Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress

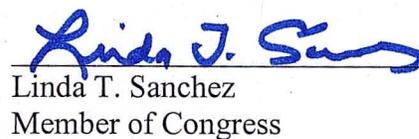

Dennis Moore
Member of Congress

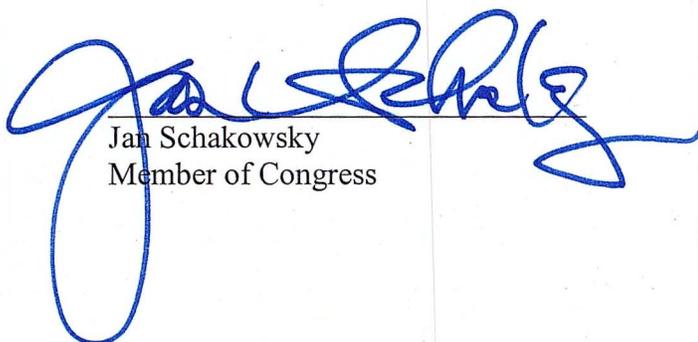

Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

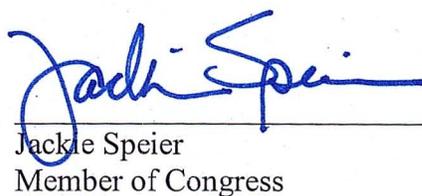

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

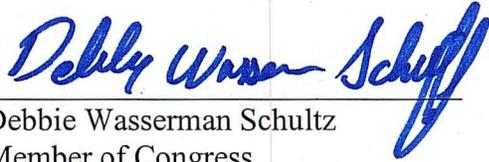

Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Jared Polis
Member of Congress


Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress

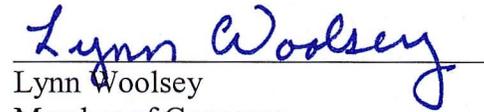

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress


Jackie Speier
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Diane E. Watson
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress


Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress

Cc: Kathleen Sebelius, Secretary of Health and Human Services.