

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 20, 2020

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker of the House
United States House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
United States House of Representatives
H-204, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-230, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Charles Schumer
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-220, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader McCarthy, Majority Leader McConnell, and Minority Leader Schumer,

As both chambers work on additional stimulus measures to mitigate the severe disruption caused by COVID-19, we write to ask you to continue to prioritize critically needed funding and resources for our nation's immigrant population. We understand that the "public charge" rule is a deterrent for symptomatic individuals to seek medical testing and treatment. Individuals infected with coronavirus who are left untested and untreated will be contagious agents of the disease in our communities, potentially furthering the spread of coronavirus in the United States.

We recommend expanding the statutory definition of an emergency service to include COVID-19. Emergency response measures to COVID-19 **must ensure that all persons are able to receive free COVID-19 testing and that none are left out of any new provisions for care and treatment.** Leaving out some communities leaves all communities at greater risk.

The preferred fix is to provide that testing -- and treatment if that is added in the next round -- under the new state option be considered treatment for an emergency condition under 42 U.S.C. 1396b(v), **which would also have the benefit of preventing any public charge considerations.** An alternative change is to amend the notwithstanding clause in section (ss) from "notwithstanding any other provision of this title" to "notwithstanding any other provision of law."

There is no justification for punishing individuals, when during a national emergency they seek emergency health services to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The expansion of this statutory definition will allow for all individuals to seek medical care, without any repercussions.

Sincerely,



TJ COX
Member of Congress



EARL BLUMENAUER



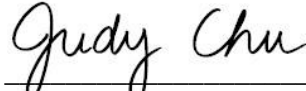
TONY CÁRDENAS



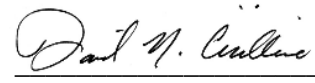
SEAN CASTEN



NANETTE DIAZ BARRAGÁN



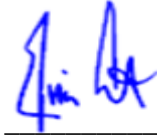
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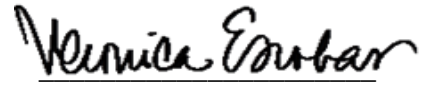
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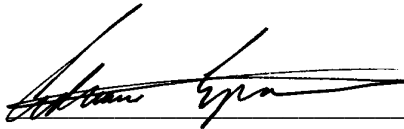
GERALD E. CONNOLLY




JIM COSTA



VERONICA ESCOBAR



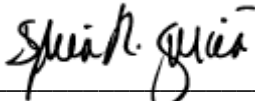
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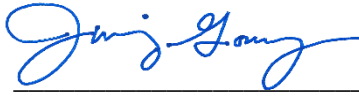
BILL FOSTER



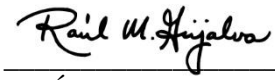
JESÚS G. "CHUY" GARCÍA



SYLVIA GARCIA



JIMMY GOMEZ



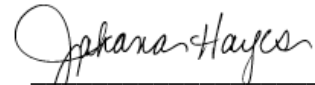
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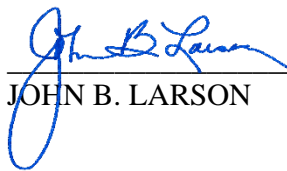
DEB HAALAND



ALCEE L. HASTINGS



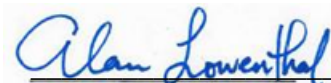
JAHANA HAYES



JOHN B. LARSON



BARBARA LEE



ALAN LOWENTHAL



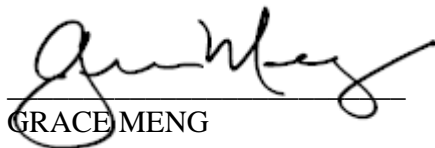
TOM MALINOWSKI



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JAMES P. MCGOVERN



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GRACE F. NAPOLITANO



ELEANOR HOLMES NORTON



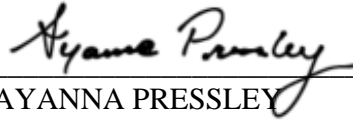
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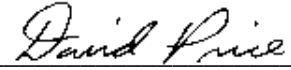
DONALD M. PAYNE, JR.



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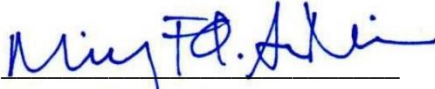
MIKE QUIGLEY



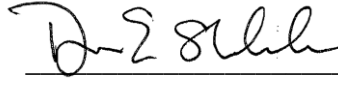
JAMIE RASKIN



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MICHAEL F.Q. SAN NICOLAS



DONNA E. SHALALA



ALBIO SIRES



ADAM SMITH



DARREN MICHAEL SOTO



HALEY STEVENS



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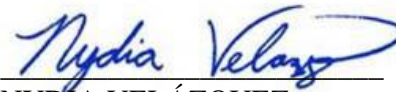
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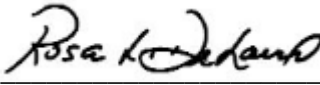
NYDIA VELÁZQUEZ



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