

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 13, 2023

President Joseph R. Biden
The White House
Washington, DC 20500

Dear President Biden:

This September, the United Nations General Assembly will host the second High Level Meeting (HLM) on Tuberculosis. **We hope to see the Administration demonstrate bold U.S. leadership against this deadly disease, bringing ambitious commitments to the HLM and encouraging other global leaders to do the same.**

Tuberculosis (TB) is largely preventable, treatable, and curable, yet before the COVID-19 pandemic it was the world's biggest infectious killer, claiming more lives each year than HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. With progress made in the fight against COVID-19, tuberculosis is now on track to reclaim its shameful top spot as the leading infectious disease killer. In 2021, an estimated 10.6 million people fell sick, and 1.6 million people needlessly lost their lives to this curable disease. TB is the leading killer of people living with HIV and is also responsible for one in three deaths from anti-microbial resistance. Without new global action from 2023-2030, the Stop TB Partnership estimates that this scourge will cost \$1 trillion in global economic loss.

At the first UN High Level meeting on TB in 2018, world leaders agreed to a bold set of measurable goals to kickstart the TB response. New funding and ambitious policy change coming out of that meeting started a new era on TB after years of neglect. When COVID-19 hit, U.S.-supported global TB programs became the backbone of the COVID-19 response in many countries. Frontline health workers, lab technicians, epidemiologists, and others quickly adapted their work with PCR testing machines, contact tracing systems, and other longstanding elements of the TB response to tackle the new threat.

However, progress in the fight against TB was massively set back by COVID-19. Lock-downs and the diversion of staff and equipment from the TB response to address the new pandemic threat had devastating consequences for people with TB. In 2020 and 2021, deaths and new cases of TB surged.

TB programs are one of the best platforms we have for respiratory pandemic preparedness and should be strengthened and integrated into primary health care to tackle both current and new threats.

In a time of such incredible opportunity and need, the Administration's bold 3-year commitment to the Global Fund last September must be matched with strengthened bilateral TB programs, and continued diplomatic efforts to draw more partners and resources to the table to fight this airborne killer. **We urge the administration to bring new concrete commitments for ending tuberculosis to the HLM, and to commit to developing a whole of government strategy for advancing the global targets to be endorsed at the HLM.**

In September, we hope to see the highest level representation from the Administration at the UN meeting. At the HLM in 2018, USAID Administrator Mark Green led the U.S. delegation and announced the new "Global Accelerator to End TB," to engage new partners and increase country commitments and accountability in the global fight against TB. **We strongly urge the Biden Administration to show up at the highest level this year, with bold new commitments reflecting the scale and urgency of the problem.**

As a leader on TB, the U.S. also has a key diplomatic role to play in bringing other countries to the table. USAID and the Department of State should be weighing in with other global leaders – encouraging countries with high burdens of TB to come forward with bold national action plans. **The U.S. must both lead by example by pledging new support to these plans and encourage other donor countries to back up the plans with bold new investments.**

The U.S. and other UN Member States will be negotiating the High Level Meeting’s political declaration in the coming weeks, and we urge the Administration to push for a set of bold goals, with specific, measurable targets. These should include:

- A measurable goal to reach everyone sick with TB with quality testing and treatment
- Specific bold new financial commitments to close the global funding gap
- Priority for a human rights and a person-centered approach to the pandemic
- Faster development and broad access to new tools, including diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines
- Commitment to ongoing high-level accountability for the declaration’s specific targets

Each element of the declaration should include clear, measurable targets to track progress at both a national and global level.

The same week in September, the UN will be hosting two additional high level meetings on Pandemic Preparedness and Universal Health Coverage. While these meetings happen on different days, it’s essential that the Administration not fall into the false choice of TB vs. pandemic prevention or expanding health services. Indeed, these areas must be mutually reinforced.

Infrastructure built for TB with USAID and Global Fund support helped lead the response during the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. By strengthening these systems and ensuring they are integrated into primary health care, we can not only better tackle the existing threat of tuberculosis, but also help stop the next pandemic. Seizing these opportunities to overall strengthen global health systems should ground the Administration’s approach to the three high level meetings this September.

It is essential that the upcoming High Level Meeting on Tuberculosis produce a meaningful result for the world. **Again, we urge this Administration to prioritize the meeting at the highest levels and to announce in person bold, new commitments for our leadership against tuberculosis.**

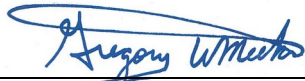
Sincerely,



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Maria Elvira Salazar
Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



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Member of Congress



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



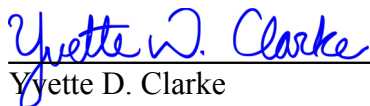
Rick Larsen
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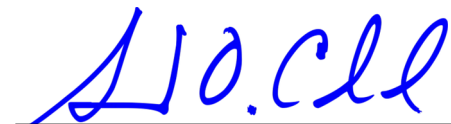
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



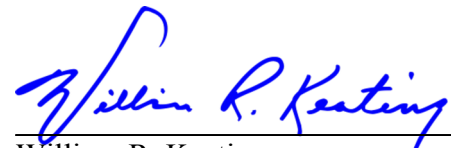
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Salud Carbajal
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Zoe Lofgren
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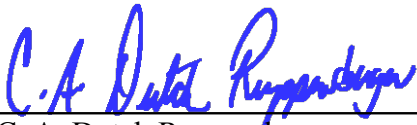
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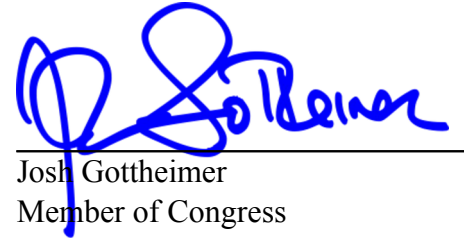
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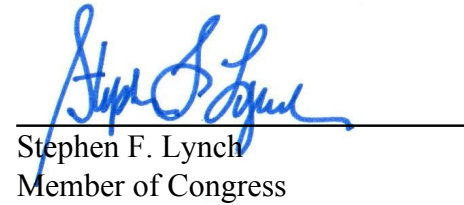
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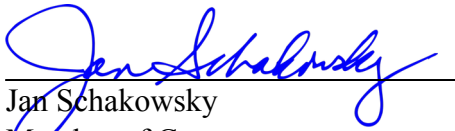
Grace Meng
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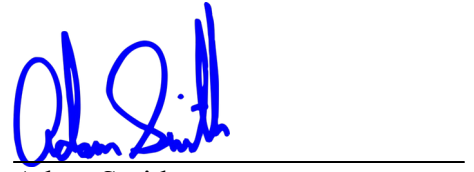
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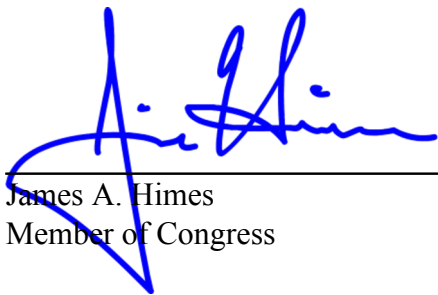
Earl Blumenauer
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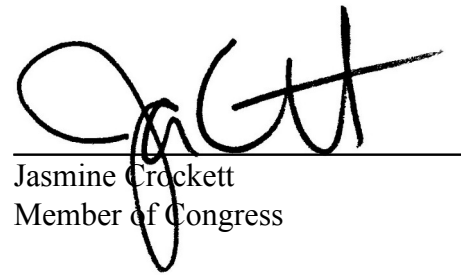
Jill Tokuda
Member of Congress



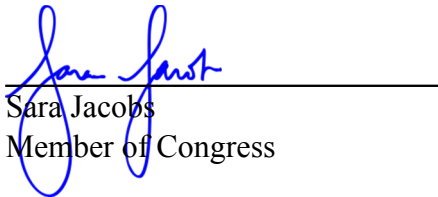
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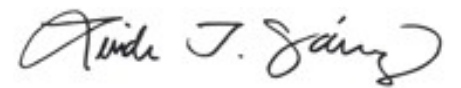
Sara Jacobs
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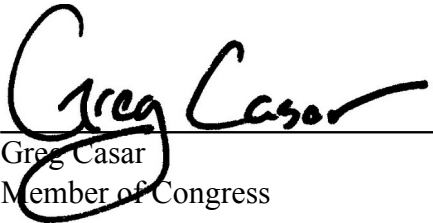
Linda T. Sánchez
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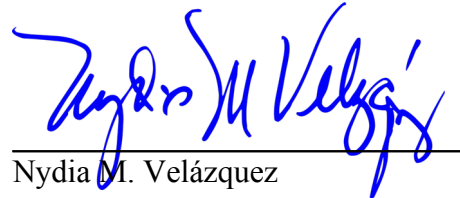
Deborah K. Ross
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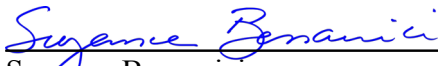
Jim Costa
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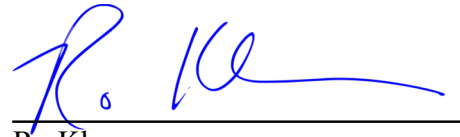
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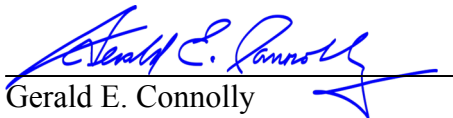
Mark DeSaulnier
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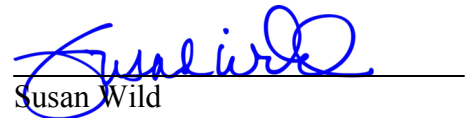



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress

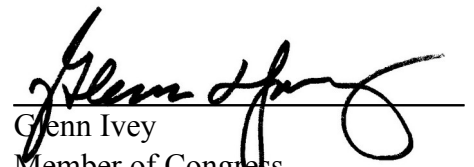



Mary Gattler Peltola
Member of Congress

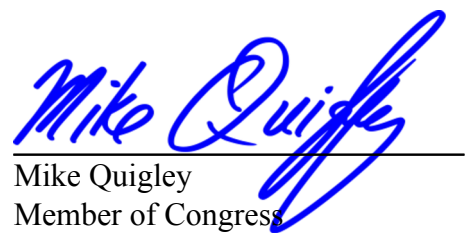

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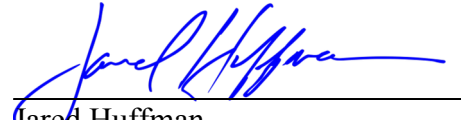

Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
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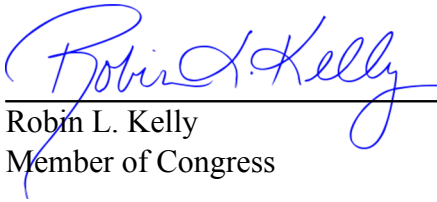

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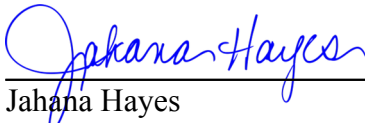
Andrea Salinas
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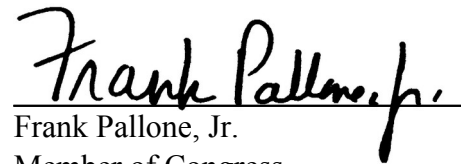
Marie Gluesenkamp Perez
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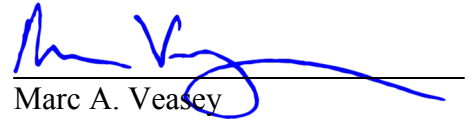
Jason Crow
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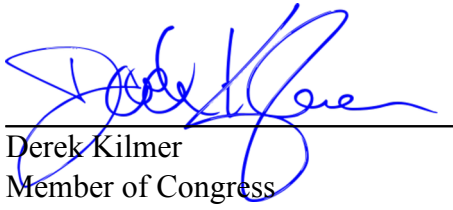
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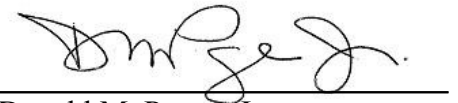
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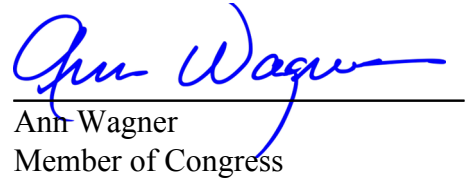
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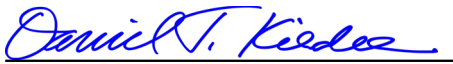
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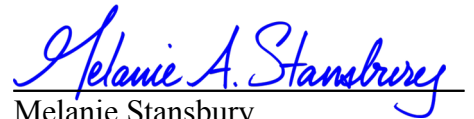
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Ann Wagner
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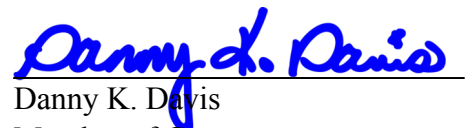
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Melanie Stansbury
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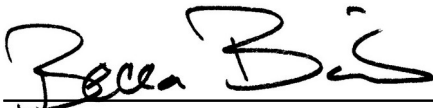
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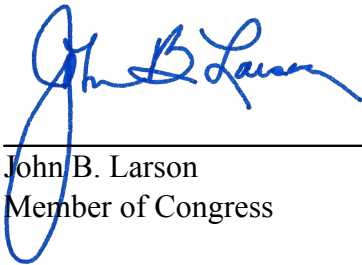
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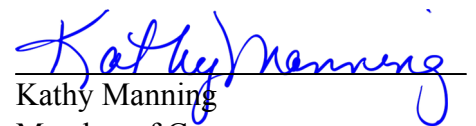

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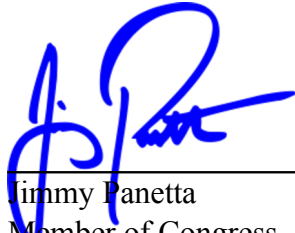

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Joe Wilson
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Diana DeGette
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Jimmy Panetta
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David Scott
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Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress

CC:

The Honorable Xavier Becerra, Secretary of Health & Human Services

The Honorable Antony J. Blinken, Secretary of State

Administrator Samantha Power, U.S. Agency for International Development

Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations

Mr. Jake Sullivan, National Security Advisor, National Security Council