

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 12, 2017

The Honorable David J. Shulkin, M.D.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
810 Vermont Ave, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

As Members of Congress who share your commitment to our nation's veterans, we write to express our extreme concern with your proposal to cut critical unemployment benefits for disabled veterans as part of your Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Submission.


Your budget request proposes to eliminate Individual Unemployability (IU) benefits to retirement-aged veterans. As you know, nearly 225,000 senior veterans across the country who depend on the IU program as an economic lifeline would be impacted by these short-sighted cuts.

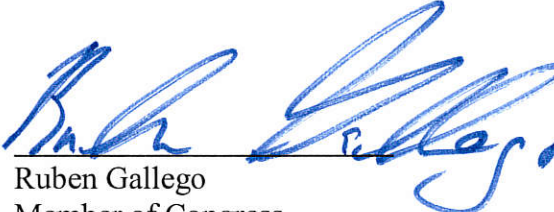
Assuming these veterans can compensate for the loss of income from IU with other retirement sources is simply incorrect. As noted by AMVETS, "these veterans have largely been disabled, out of the work force and not paying into Social Security for many years before reaching 65. Many have been severely disabled as a result of their military service and unable to work since the day of their discharge." With little to no access to resources like 401(k)'s, IU payments provide needed support for these veterans and their families.

Gutting critical benefits for our veterans who have been unable to find work as a result of their service-related disabilities breaks our fundamental promise to the brave men and women who served our country in uniform. Our district offices, in addition to local VSO's, report receiving calls from worried veterans who would be devastated by these proposed cuts.

Ending the IU program for our neediest veterans would mark a stark departure from long-standing bipartisan commitments to end veteran homelessness and poverty, and would leave thousands struggling to make ends meet. More than ever, we must continue to build on progress in our states to permanently end veteran homelessness, not undermine these critical efforts. To that end, we strongly oppose the proposed changes to IU and will work to ensure that these dangerous cuts are not implemented.

Sincerely,


Tom O'Halleran
Member of Congress


Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress




Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



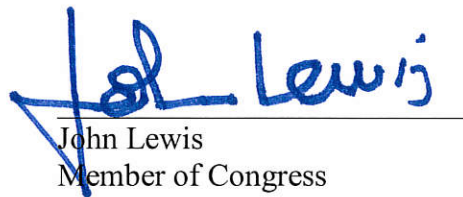
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Jacky Rosen
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Mark Takano
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



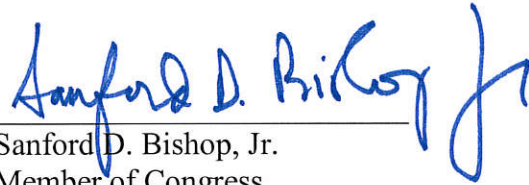
Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Salud O. Carbajal
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Walter B. Jones
Member of Congress



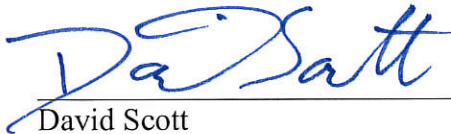
Ruben Kihuen
Member of Congress



Josh Gottheimer
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



David Scott
Member of Congress



Anthony G. Brown
Member of Congress



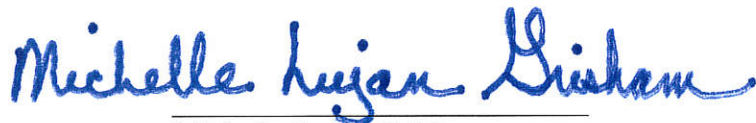
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



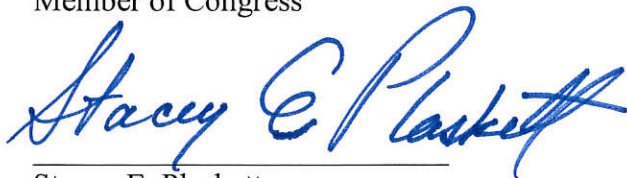
Collin C. Peterson
Member of Congress



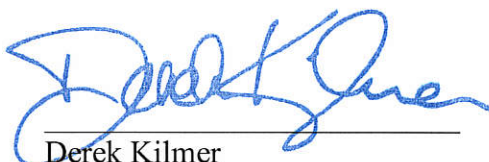
Raul Ruiz
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Debbie Dingell
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Stacey E. Plaskett
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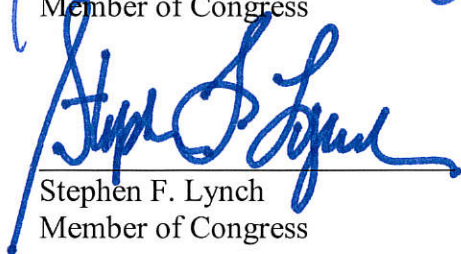
Derek Kilmer
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Alcee L. Hastings
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Chellie Pingree
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Stephen F. Lynch
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Colleen Hanabusa
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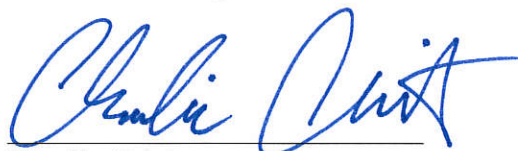
Gwen Moore
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Cedric L. Richmond
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Tulsi Gabbard
Member of Congress



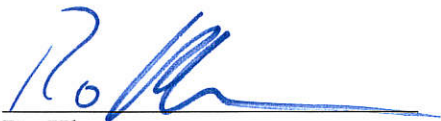
Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
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Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



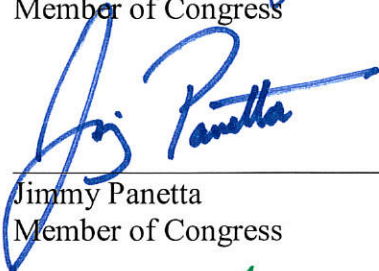
Stephanie N. Murphy
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



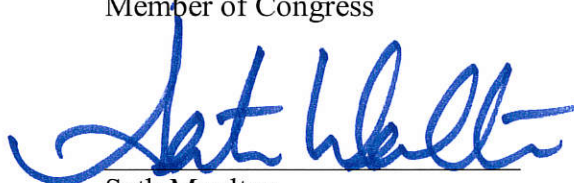
Jimmy Panetta
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Tony Cardenas
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Gene Green
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John Garamendi
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Joe Courtney
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Filemon Vela
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