

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 15, 2026

The Honorable John Thune
Senate Majority Leader
S-230, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Senate Minority Leader
S-220, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Mike Johnson
Speaker of the House
H-232, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Hakeem Jeffries
House Minority Leader
H-204, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Leader Thune, Speaker Johnson, Leader Schumer, and Leader Jeffries,

We write to urge you to reject the Trump Administration's proposed pay freeze and work to provide federal employees with a meaningful pay increase in 2027 that keeps pace with the rising cost of living.

Federal employees have endured an extraordinarily difficult period marked by government shutdowns and repeated efforts to strip away longstanding civil service protections, all while continuing to deliver the benefits and services Americans rely on every day. These challenges have come on top of just a 2 percent pay raise in 2025 and a 1 percent raise in 2026. Asking these public servants to now accept a pay freeze as the cost of living continues to rise amounts to an effective pay cut.

The Administration's own proposal on federal pay increases demonstrates why such an increase is necessary. President Trump has proposed that federal law enforcement personnel receive a 3.8 percent pay increase to improve recruitment and retention, and has proposed a 5-7 percent pay increase for service members given the critical support they provide our nation. The same rationale applies to all federal workers.

The federal government must recruit and retain skilled employees to care for our veterans, protect our national security, inspect our food and medicine, conduct lifesaving research, process benefits, secure federal networks, and perform countless other critical functions. If competitive compensation is necessary to recruit and retain qualified federal law enforcement officers, it is also necessary to recruit and retain qualified employees throughout the federal government.

Without a meaningful pay raise, we risk further exacerbating staffing challenges at critical agencies like the Department of Health and Human Services, whose employees conduct lifesaving medical research, monitor disease outbreaks, administer critical health programs, and protect the safety of our food and medicines. HHS has already lost thousands of employees, including significant reductions at the FDA, reducing the agency's capacity to conduct inspections essential to Americans' wellbeing. At a time when families are seeing repeated food recalls and outbreaks, further weakening the federal workforce responsible for inspecting facilities and identifying contamination could put even greater strain on our food-safety system.

A pay cut could similarly exacerbate staffing challenges across other mission-critical agencies. At the Social Security Administration, further workforce losses could mean longer waits for seniors, people with disabilities, and families seeking benefits. And at agencies responsible for our national security, including the Cybersecurity

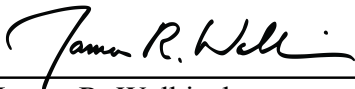
and Infrastructure Security Agency, a pay freeze could make it even harder to recruit and retain the highly skilled cybersecurity professionals needed to protect federal networks and critical infrastructure. That is especially concerning as cyberattacks targeting critical infrastructure, including our energy, water, transportation, and communications systems, continue to grow more frequent and sophisticated.

At a minimum, federal civilian employees should receive the same 3.8 percent pay increase the Administration has proposed for federal law enforcement. We strongly believe, however, that Congress should go further and provide the 4.1 percent increase called for in the FAIR Act, which would help federal pay keep pace with rising costs while ensuring the government can continue to attract and retain the workforce necessary to serve the American people.

There's precedent for Congress taking action when a President fails to ensure federal employee pay keeps pace with the cost of living. In 2019, after President Trump initially froze federal employee pay, Congress rejected the freeze and enacted a pay increase. Congress should once again exercise its authority to ensure federal employees receive a fair and meaningful adjustment to their pay in 2027.

We therefore urge you to include a federal employee pay increase of no less than 3.8 percent, and preferably the 4.1 percent provided under the FAIR Act, in Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations legislation.

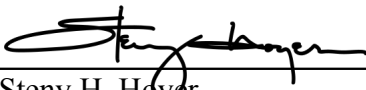
Sincerely,



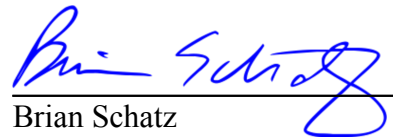
James R. Walkinshaw
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
United States Senator



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Brian Schatz
United States Senator



Brian K. Fitzpatrick
Member of Congress



Tim Kaine
United States Senator



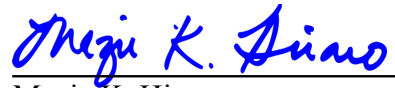
Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



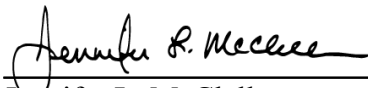
Mark R. Warner
United States Senator



Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



Mazie K. Hirono
United States Senator



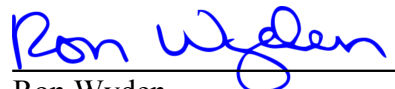
Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



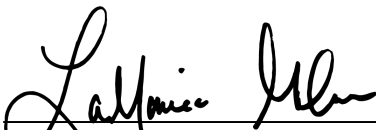
Angela D. Alsobrooks
United States Senator



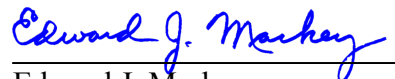
Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Ron Wyden
United States Senator



LaMonica McIver
Member of Congress



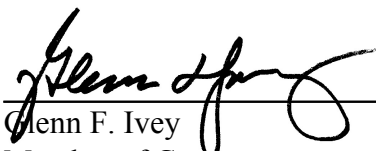
Edward J. Markey
United States Senator



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



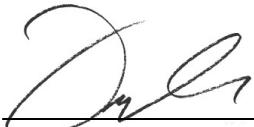
Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



Glenn F. Ivey
Member of Congress



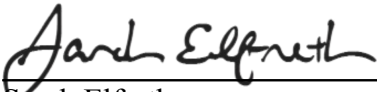
Richard Blumenthal
United States Senator



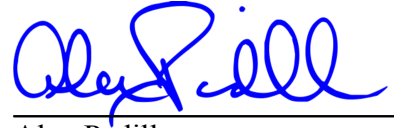
Troy A. Carter, Sr.
Member of Congress



Tammy Duckworth
United States Senator



Sarah Elfreth
Member of Congress



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



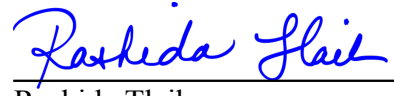
Dan Goldman
Member of Congress



Eugene Simon Vindman
Member of Congress



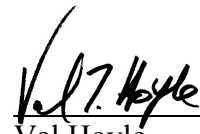
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



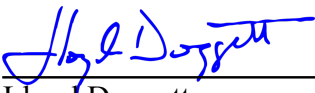
Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



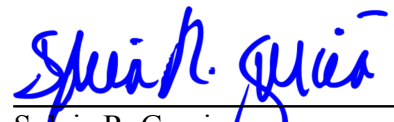
André Carson
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



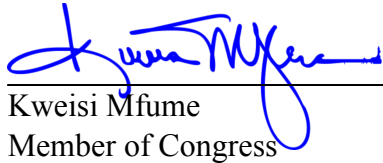
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



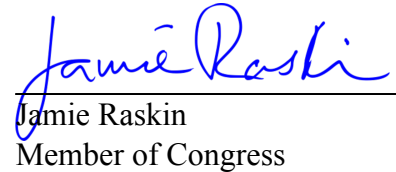
Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Kweisi Mfume
Member of Congress



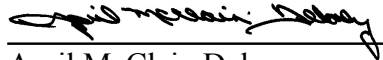
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Deborah K. Ross
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



April McClain Delaney
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



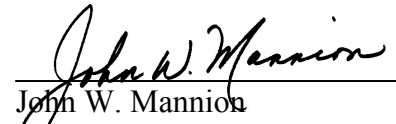
Analilia Mejia
Member of Congress



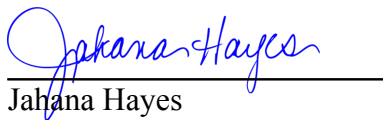
Maxine Waters
Member of Congress



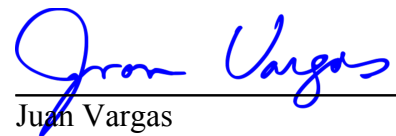
Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



John W. Mannion
Member of Congress



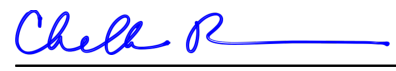
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter, M.D.
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



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



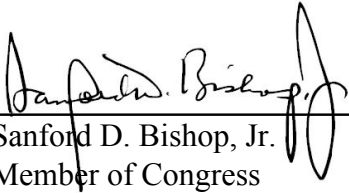
Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



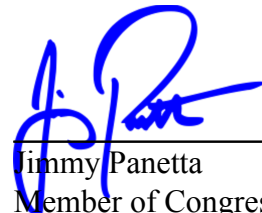
Wesley Bell
Member of Congress



Adelita S. Grijalva
Member of Congress



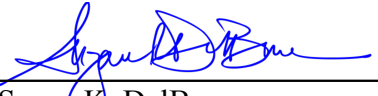
Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
Member of Congress



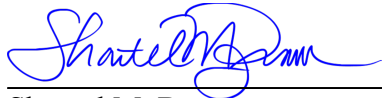
Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



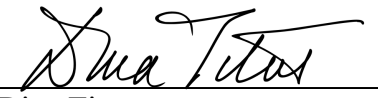
Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



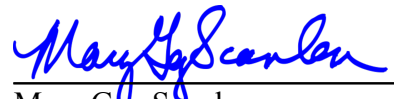
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



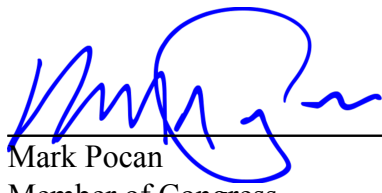
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



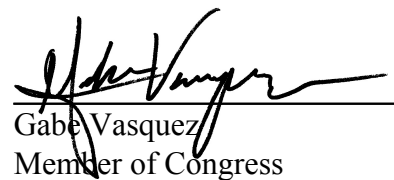
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



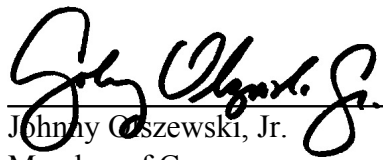
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



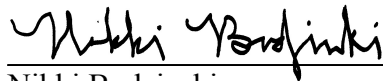
Johnny Giszewski, Jr.
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



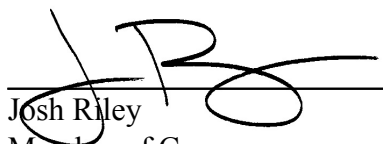
Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



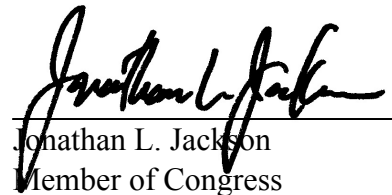
Nikki Budzinski
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



Josh Riley
Member of Congress



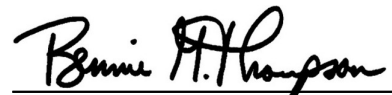
Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Bill Foster
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



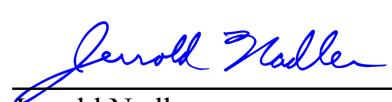
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



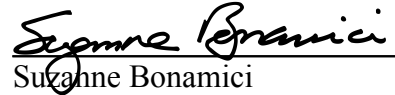
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



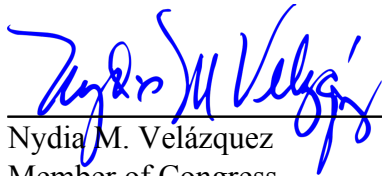
Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



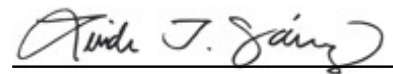
Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



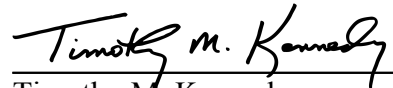
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



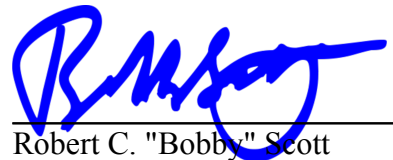
Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



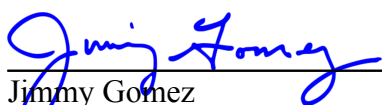
Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



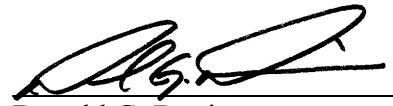
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



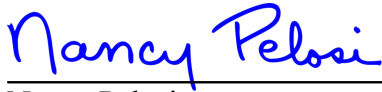
Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Donald G. Davis
Member of Congress



Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



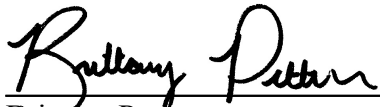
Summer L. Lee
Member of Congress



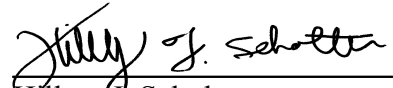
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



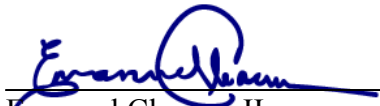
Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Brittany Petersen
Member of Congress



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



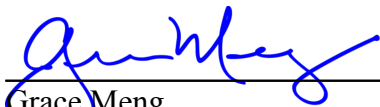
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



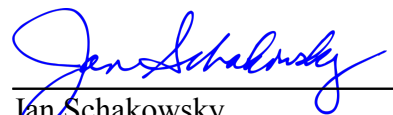
Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



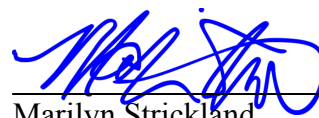
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



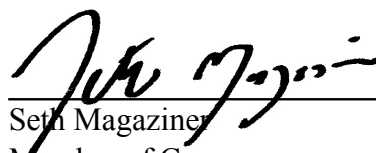
Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress