

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 14, 2011

The Honorable Patty Murray
The Honorable Max Baucus
The Honorable John Kerry
The Honorable John Kyl
The Honorable Rob Portman
The Honorable Pat Toomey

The Honorable Jeb Hensarling
The Honorable Xavier Becerra
The Honorable Dave Camp
The Honorable Jim Clyburn
The Honorable Fred Upton
The Honorable Chris Van Hollen

Dear Members of the Joint Select Committee on Deficit Reduction:

As you work to identify strategies to reduce the country's long-term deficit, we urge you to protect, prioritize and strengthen federal investments in education, basic scientific research, and technological development, which are essential to creating economic opportunity and job growth.

Although there is bipartisan agreement that targeted spending reductions are a necessary component of long-term deficit reduction, it is clear that a balanced budget cannot be achieved solely through cuts to domestic discretionary expenditures. One of the most effective means of deficit reduction is a growing economy, and imprudent reductions to programs that contribute directly to economic growth would in fact undermine our deficit reduction goals as well as our future economic prosperity.

History is clear on the importance of innovation to sustained job creation, and America has traditionally led the world in seizing economic opportunity through innovation. Our investments in education, research and development – including funding for basic science and biomedical research at universities and federal labs and wise incentives for private sector research – have put our economy on the cutting edge of the world's most advanced industries. These investments are a powerful way to spur job growth and are a must for a country that seeks to be competitive in the 21st Century economy.

Research not only creates jobs directly for those involved, but does so indirectly for many others through innovations that lead to new technologies, new industries and new companies. In fact, more than half of U.S. economic growth since World War II has been attributed to technological innovation, much of which is the result of federally funded research. Such groundbreaking research has created vaccines, lasers, the MRI, Global Positioning Systems, the Internet, and a host of other advances that have grown our economy, improved our health, and made our nation stronger and more secure.

In addition, our research and development funding has helped train the next generation of scientists at the nation's educational institutions. We can fully develop our nation's human capital only if we offer all our citizens the opportunity to achieve the highest possible levels of education. Strategic investments in education and student aid have made it possible for generations of Americans to obtain a college education, regardless of their income.

Despite the high level of return on investment that comes from funding scientific research, federal funding for research and development as a fraction of GDP has declined by 60 percent in 40 years. In contrast, China increased its research and development investment at an annual rate of 5.7 percent of GDP between 2001 and 2007. Furthermore, America is ranked 37th among countries in terms of education spending in relation to GDP.

Further constraining domestic discretionary funding on education and scientific research will hinder our culture of innovation, adversely affecting our national security and the ability to improve our nation's health and economic recovery. As you continue your work, we strongly urge the Committee to ensure that deficit reduction policies strengthen, rather than harm, the nation's education, science and research infrastructure.

Thank you for your consideration.

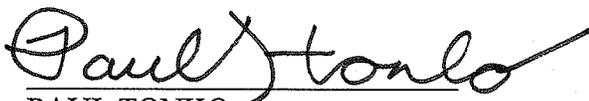
Sincerely,



DAVID PRICE
Member of Congress



RUSH HOLT
Member of Congress



PAUL TONKO
Member of Congress



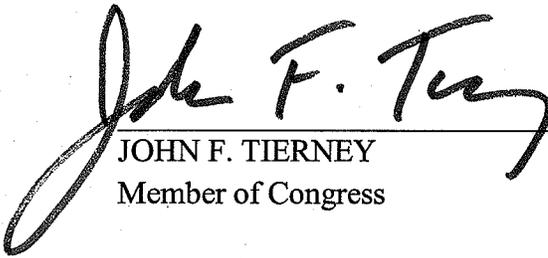
LAURA RICHARDSON
Member of Congress



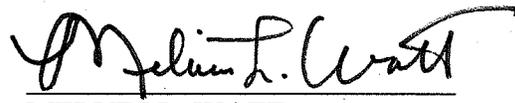
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BRIAN HIGGINS
Member of Congress



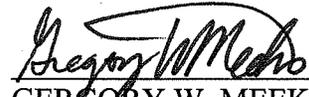
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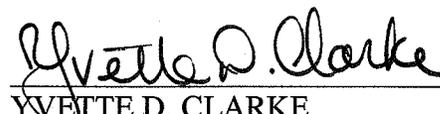
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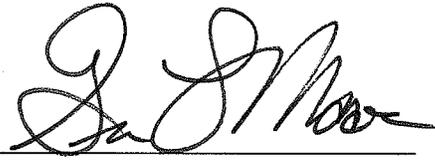
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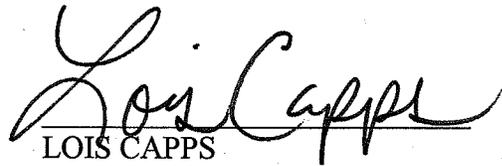
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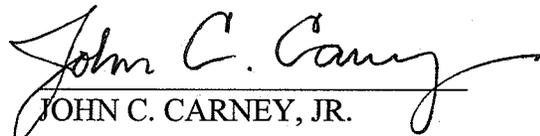
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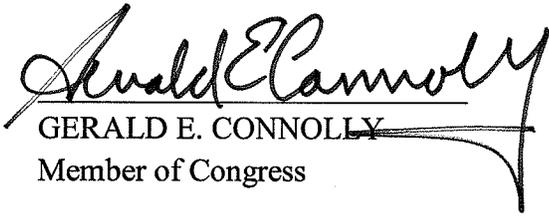
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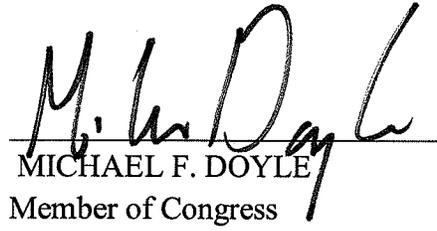
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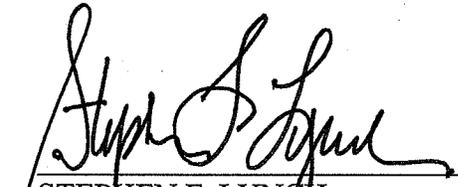
Michael E. Capuano

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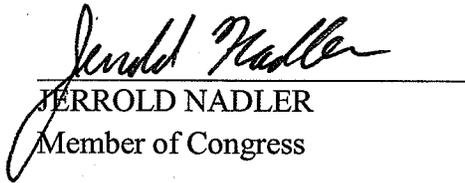
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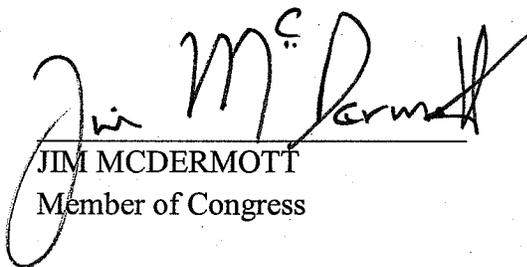
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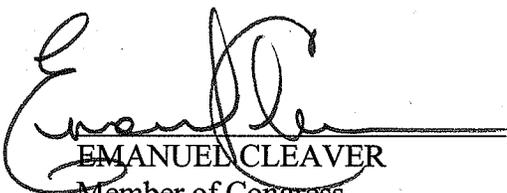
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