

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

June 1, 2021

The Honorable Lloyd Austin
Secretary of Defense
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

We appreciate the hard work of the brave volunteers that make up the National Guard. They have served our nation honorably, both at home and abroad. After the unprecedented events of the past year that included COVID-19 response and civil unrest in addition to natural disasters and overseas deployments, we owe the National Guard a debt of gratitude. However, strain on the National Guard has been building for years as hurricane response in Florida, winter storm and flood rescue in Texas, and combatting wildfires in California has been persistent.

As you may know, 15 of the nation's top 25 most populous counties are located within California, Florida, and Texas. As elected representatives from the nation's three most populous states, we have an obligation to ensure that these civilian warriors, and our state bureaus, have the resources they need to fulfill the full range of missions we task them with, including defense support for civil authorities and domestic missions in support of Governors.

However, with our current and growing population levels, our states have the lowest Guardsmen-to-civilian ratios in the country, with California at 54th, Florida at 53rd, and Texas at 52nd. The extraordinary circumstances of the past year have highlighted the strain on our Guard units have been under for too long, potentially hurting recruitment, retention, and readiness. The limited resources allocated to our states has affected our Guard bureaus' ability to rotate personnel, putting greater demands on Guard families.

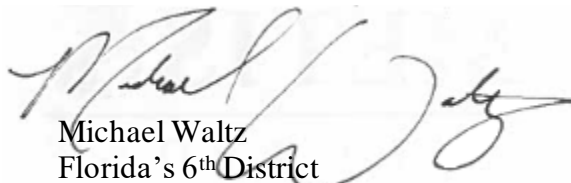
We appreciate that the Department has recognized this concern. In its implementation guidance for the National Defense Strategy, the Department said: "Demographic and economic trends within the U.S. will challenge our ability to recruit and retain quality Guardsmen over the next several years. Meeting this challenge is fundamental to our long-term success."

Furthermore, among the recommendations in the National Guard Bureau's "*Impact of U.S. Population Trends on National Guard Force Structure*" Report to Congress released in April 2021, the Bureau says: "as the U.S. population continues to shift from North and North Central regions of the country to the South and West, the National Guard may need to evaluate re-allocating mission sets to other geographic areas to keep pace with changing demographics across the country."

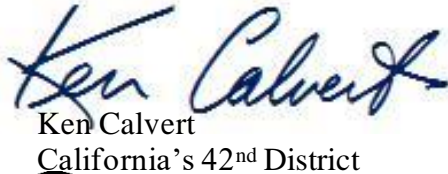
Therefore, we respectfully ask that you carefully review the report, examine the current resource allocations, and work with us to grow the size of Guard bureaus in our states. As we consider National Guard force structure policy in the National Defense Authorization Act, please let us know what resources or authorities you need to ensure they have an appropriate and sustainable force structure allocation to meet their mission requirements, without impacting missions in other states.

Thank you for your kind consideration.

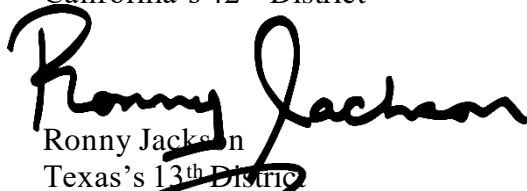
Cordially,



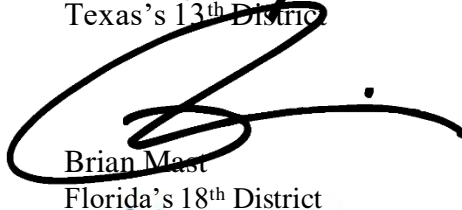
Michael Waltz
Florida's 6th District



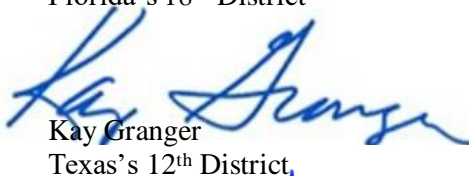
Ken Calvert
California's 42nd District



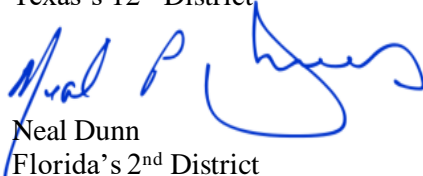
Ronny Jackson
Texas's 13th District



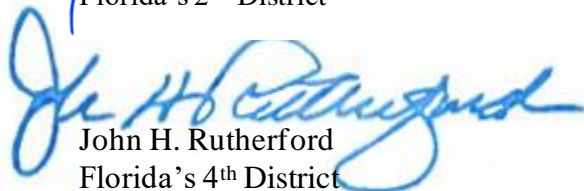
Brian Mast
Florida's 18th District



Kay Granger
Texas's 12th District



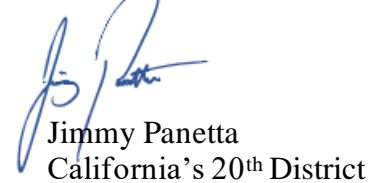
Neal Dunn
Florida's 2nd District



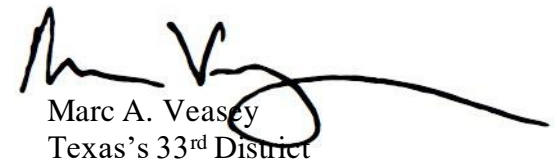
John H. Rutherford
Florida's 4th District



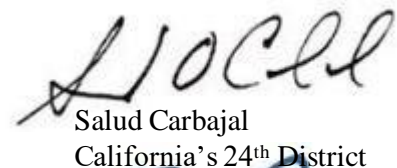
Stephanie Murphy
Florida's 7th District



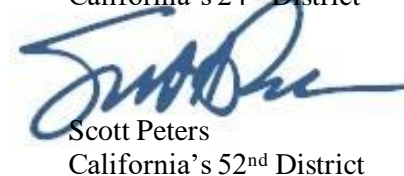
Jimmy Panetta
California's 20th District



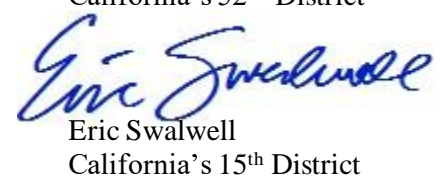
Marc A. Veasey
Texas's 33rd District



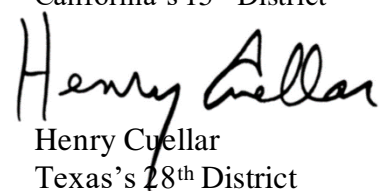
Salud Carbajal
California's 24th District



Scott Peters
California's 52nd District



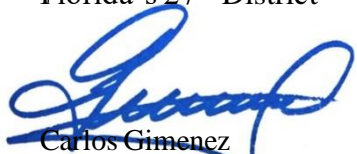
Eric Swalwell
California's 15th District



Henry Cuellar
Texas's 28th District



Maria Elvira Salazar
Florida's 27th District



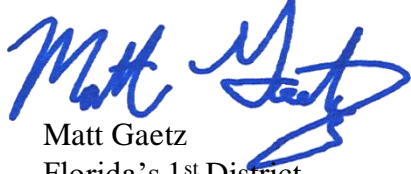
Carlos Gimenez
Florida's 26th District



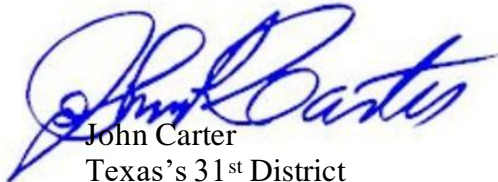
Louie Gohmert
Texas's 1st District



Pat Fallon
Texas's 4th District



Matt Gaetz
Florida's 1st District



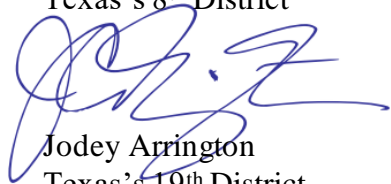
John Carter
Texas's 31st District



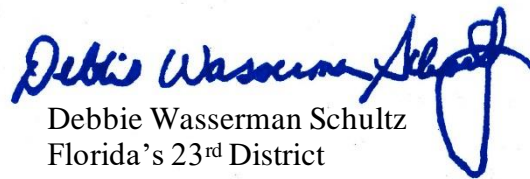
Scott Franklin
Florida's 15th District



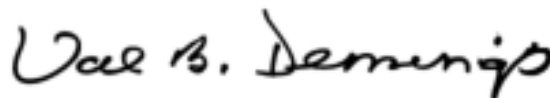
Kevin Brady
Texas's 8th District



Jodey Arrington
Texas's 19th District



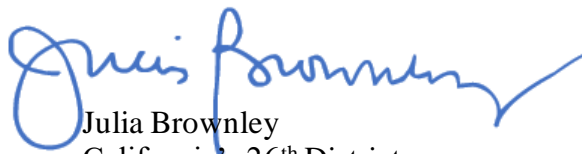
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Florida's 23rd District



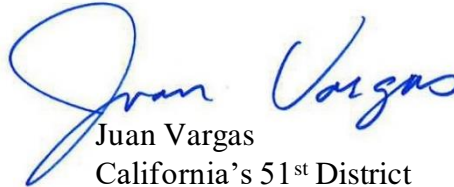
Val Demings
Florida's 5th District



Al Lawson
Florida's 5th District



Julia Brownley
California's 26th District



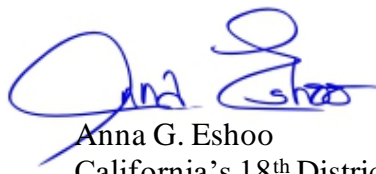
Juan Vargas
California's 51st District



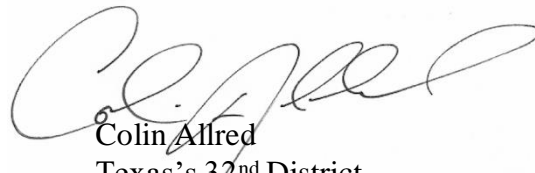
Mike Garcia
California's 25th District



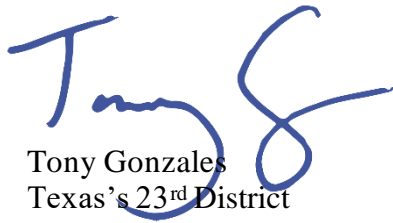
Sara Jacobs
California's 53rd District




Anna G. Eshoo
California's 18th District



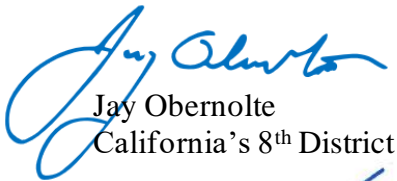
Colin Allred
Texas's 32nd District



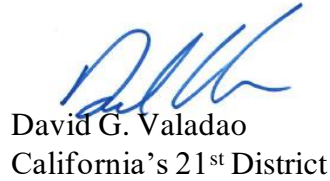
Tony Gonzales
Texas's 23rd District



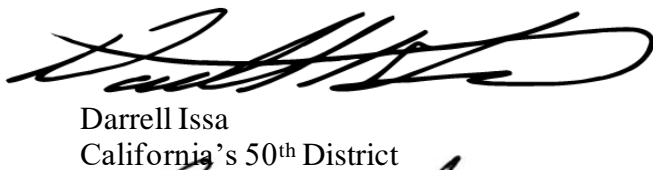
Young Kim
California's 39th District



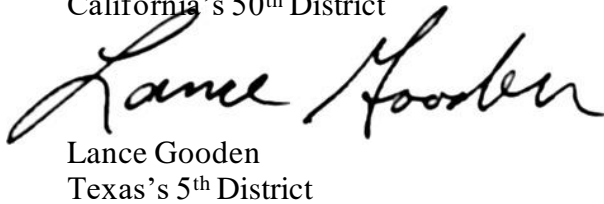
Jay Obernolte
California's 8th District



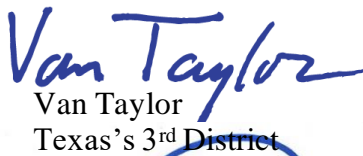
David G. Valadao
California's 21st District



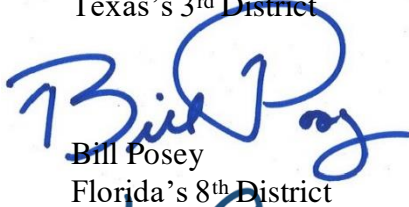
Darrell Issa
California's 50th District



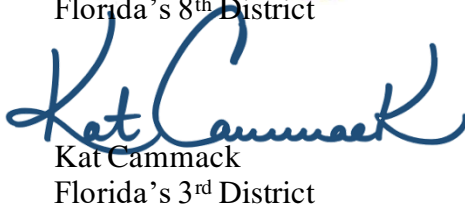
Lance Gooden
Texas's 5th District



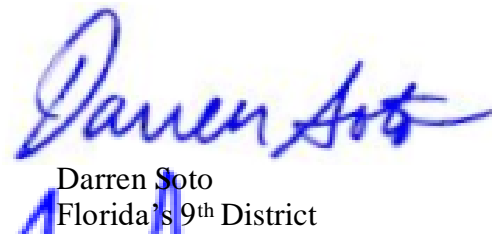
Van Taylor
Texas's 3rd District



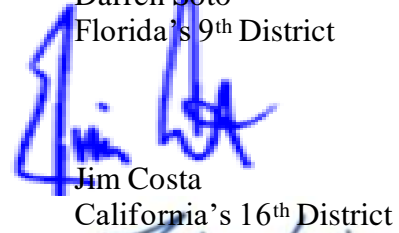
Bill Posey
Florida's 8th District



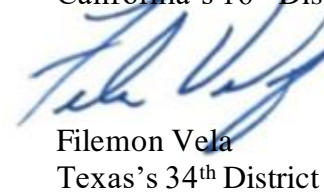
Kat Cammack
Florida's 3rd District



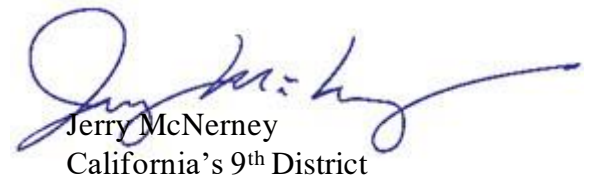
Darren Soto
Florida's 9th District



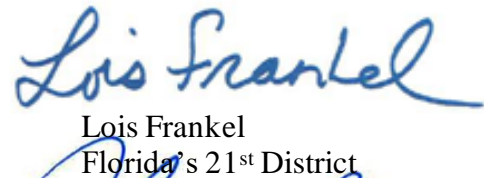
Jim Costa
California's 16th District



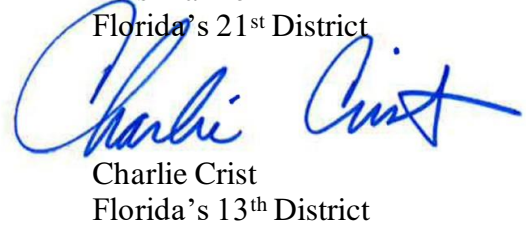
Filemon Vela
Texas's 34th District



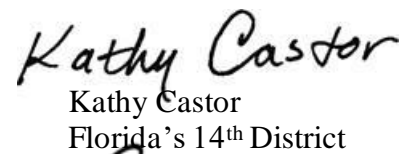
Jerry McNerney
California's 9th District



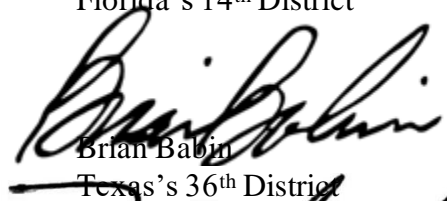
Lois Frankel
Florida's 21st District



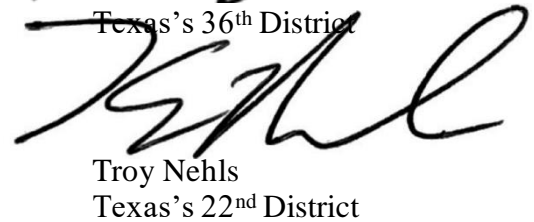
Charlie Crist
Florida's 13th District



Kathy Castor
Florida's 14th District



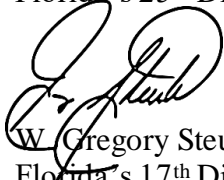
Brian Babin
Texas's 36th District



Troy Nehls
Texas's 22nd District



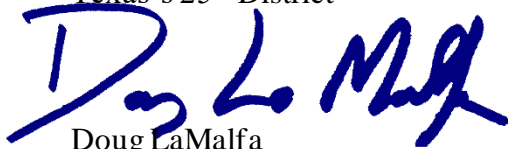
Mario Diaz-Balart
Florida's 25th District



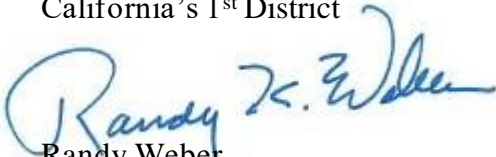
W. Gregory Steube
Florida's 17th District



Roger Williams
Texas's 25th District



Doug LaMalfa
California's 1st District



Randy Weber
Texas's 14th District



Beth Van Duyne
Texas's 24th District



Pete Sessions
Texas's 17th District



Michael T. McCaul
Texas's 10th District



Gus Bilirakis
Florida's 12th District