Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 1, 2005

The Honorable Jerry Lewis, Chairman
House Appropriations Committee
H-281, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable David R. Obey, Ranking Member
House Appropriations Committee
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Lewis & Ranking Member Obey:

We are writing to express our strong support for the highest possible funding for Head Start as you develop the FY 2006 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Appropriations bill. We are especially concerned that the President's FY 2006 budget calls for converting the program into a block grant and provides no funding increase for the program.

Head Start programs provide comprehensive education to children and their families to combat poverty and improve the richness of the early learning experience. The program currently assists hundreds of thousands of children and their families nationwide. A child's first years are critical to future success and well-being. Since 1965, Head Start has provided necessary education, nutritional, health care and social services to millions of children.

Under the President's budget, Head Start would be turned into a block grant program, effectively ending Congress' specific and long-standing commitment to aiding the most vulnerable of our nation's children. In addition, even though Head Start currently serves only 60 percent of eligible children, the President's budget freezes funding for Head Start at FY 2005 funding levels. As a result, 25,000 fewer children will get the services they so desperately need.

Just a few years ago, we made a promise to the nation that we would leave no child behind. Unless funding is increased for Head Start, we will continue to leave thousands of children behind and deny them the critical services that comprise this highly successful program. Head Start is an investment in our future that merits the additional funding we are requesting.

Sincerely,

Adam B. Schiff, M.C.

Mike Ross, M.C.

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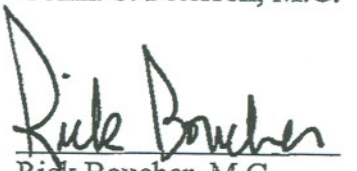
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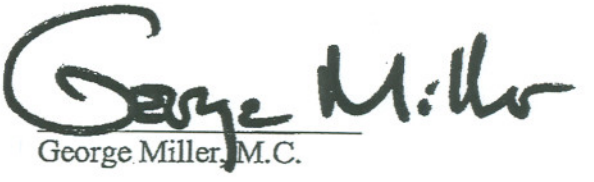
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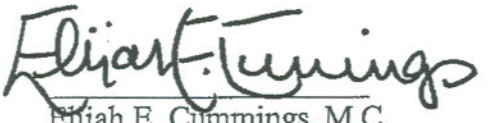
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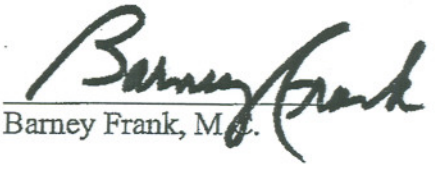
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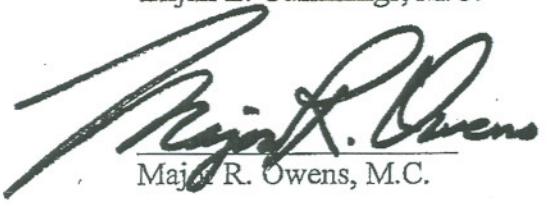
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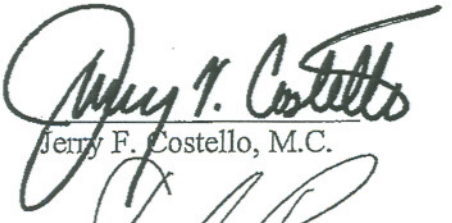
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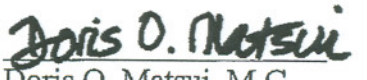
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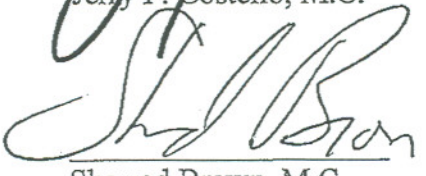
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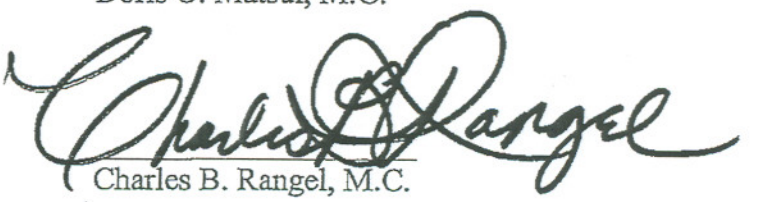
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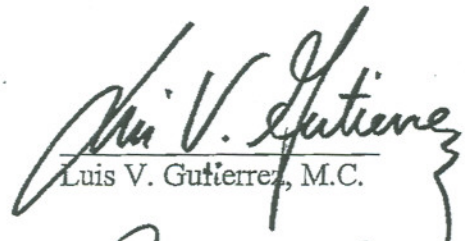

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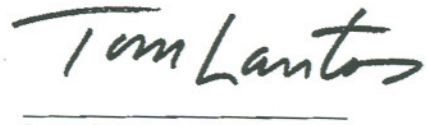

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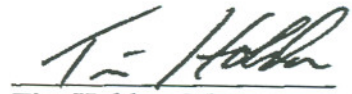

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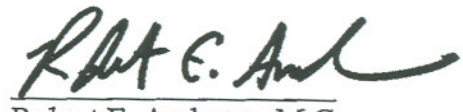

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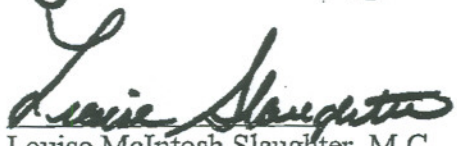

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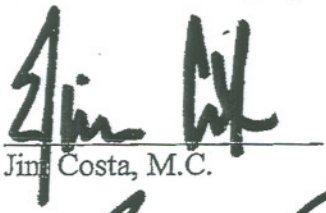

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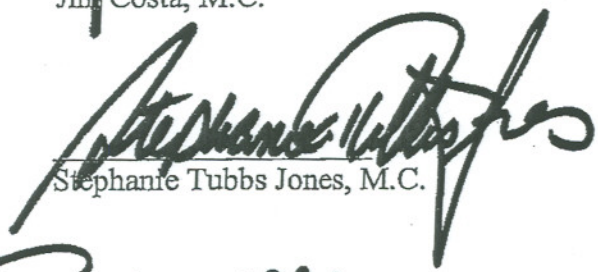

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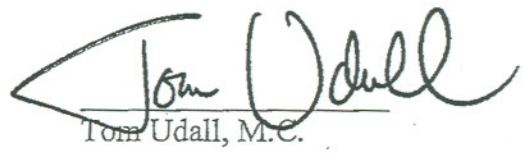

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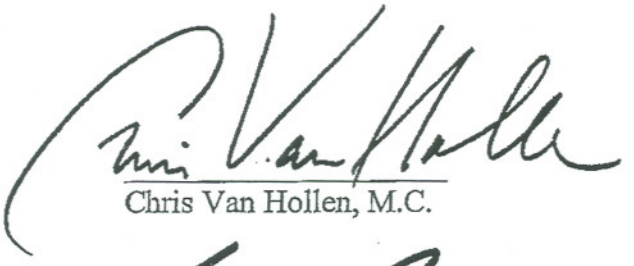

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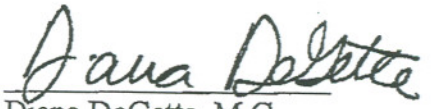

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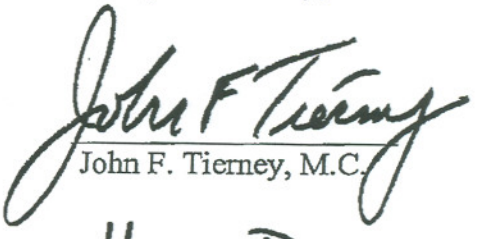

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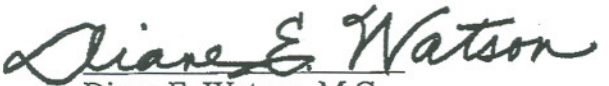

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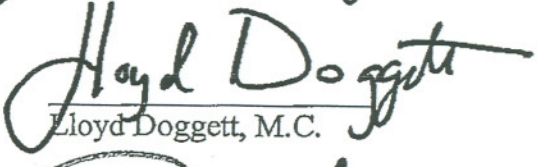

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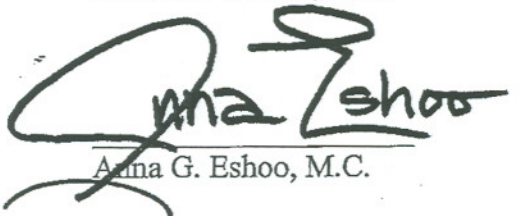

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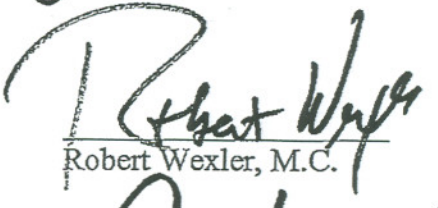

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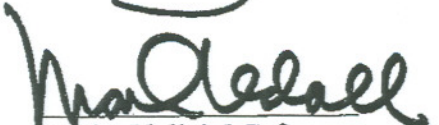

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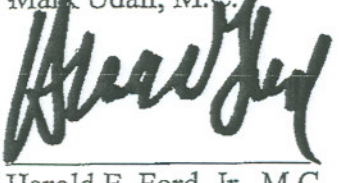

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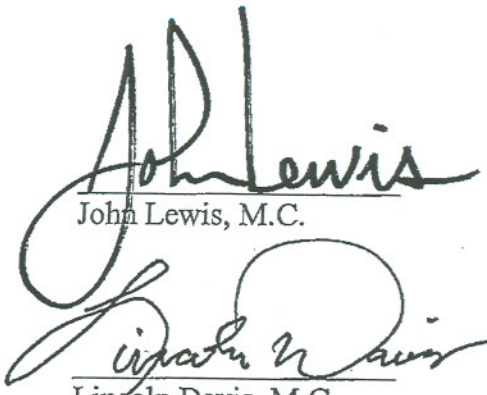

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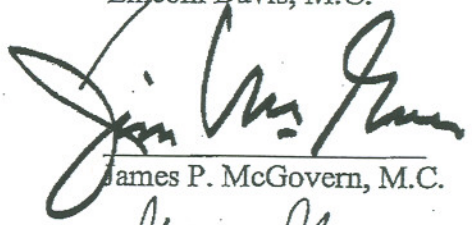

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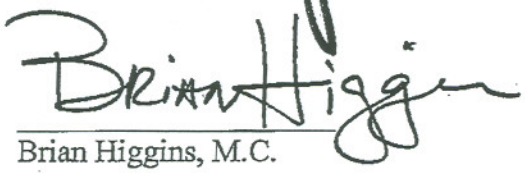

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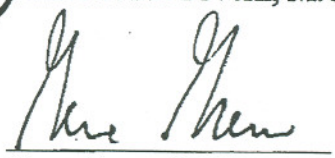

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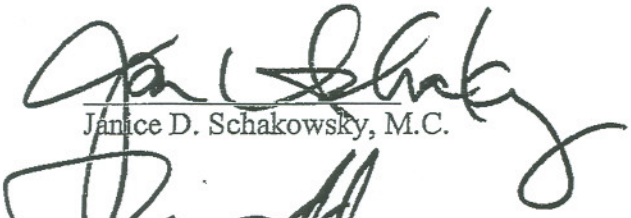

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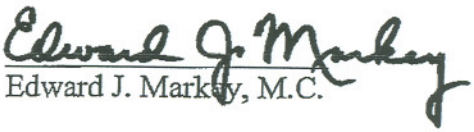

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