

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

December 19, 2007

The Honorable Robert Gates
The Secretary of Defense
Room: 3E880
1000 Defense Pentagon
Washington, DC 20301-1000

Dear Mr. Secretary,

For each of the last two years, the United States Air Force (USAF) has not funded any C-17s in the President's budget submission. USAF leaders have expressed concerns during recent Congressional hearings regarding their inability to procure additional C-17s and have asked the House of Representative to add funding for C-17s during the appropriations process. While this approach was successful last year and may work again this year, there is widespread dissatisfaction in the House with this strategy. We instead are strongly urging that the USAF and DoD fully fund C-17 production in their FY 09 budget submission.

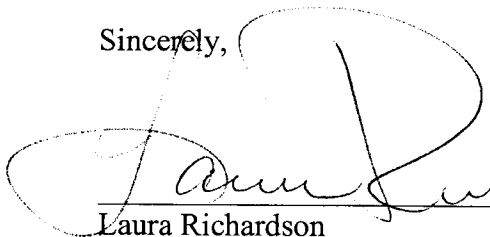
Failure to fund the C-17 will mean the loss of over 30,000 jobs in the U.S., loss of the nation's large military airplane industrial base, and will result in our loss of leadership in this area to Europe. Reopening the C-17 production line, if the DoD discovers it needs additional C-17s in the future, will cost billions and take years.

The USAF and DoD must continue to fund C-17s until all of the Department's on-going and planned airlift studies are complete and requirements are understood. We strongly urge you to fully fund 15 C-17s in the FY 09 budget submission. The approach used in the last two years – no funds but a last minute appeal to the Congress – will result in a strong negative response.

We need your commitment that you will do all you can to fund C-17 in the FY09 budget. We also request that if you cannot fully fund C-17s, additional aircraft must at least be at the top of your unfunded priority list at number one. The C-17 line is truly on the verge of shutting down – this would be a terrible outcome for the DoD and the nation.

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

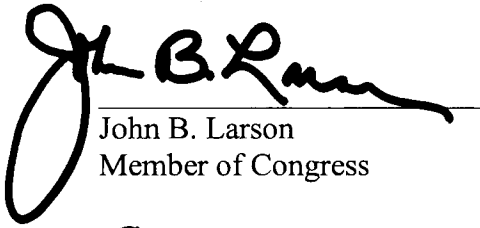
Sincerely,

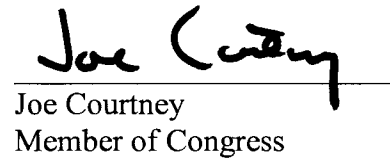


Laura Richardson
Member of Congress

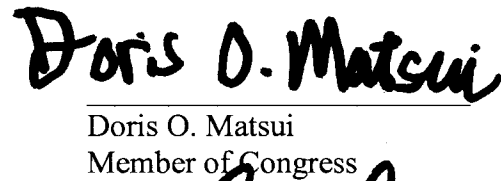


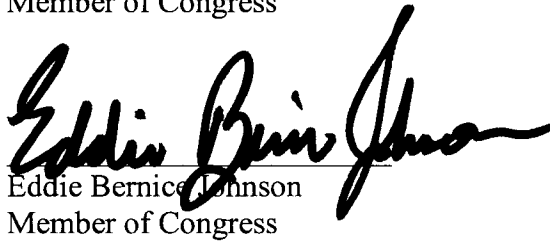
Todd Akin
Member of Congress

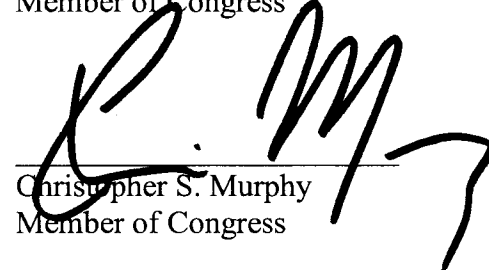

John B. Larson
Member of Congress

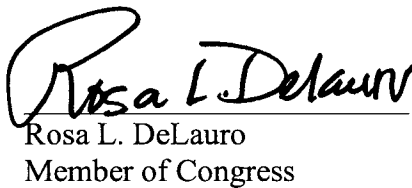

Joe Courtney
Member of Congress

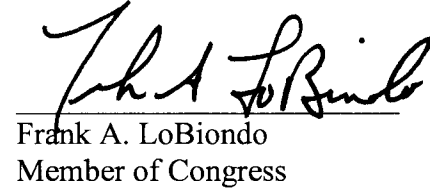

Corrine Brown
Member of Congress

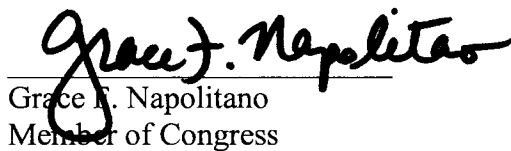

Doris O. Matsui
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Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress

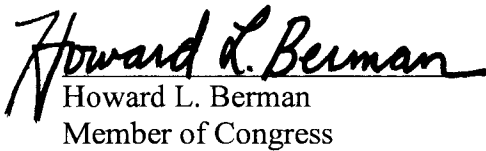

Christopher S. Murphy
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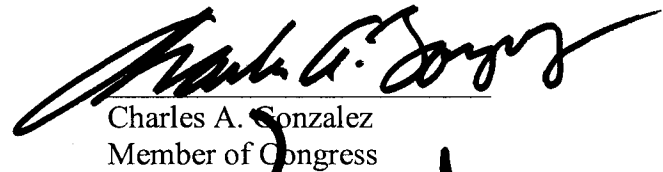

Rosa L. DeLauro
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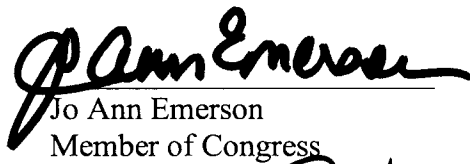

Frank A. LoBiondo
Member of Congress

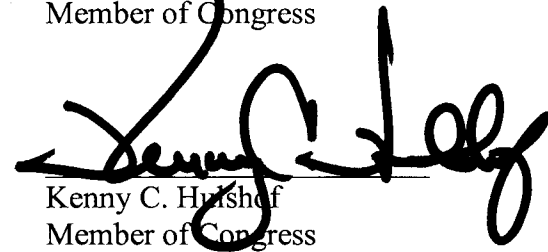

Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress

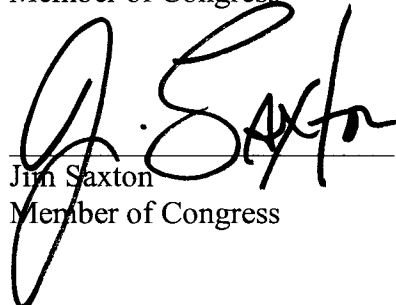

Jane Harman
Member of Congress

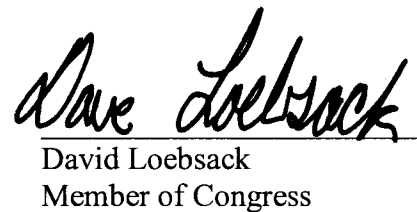

Howard L. Berman
Member of Congress



Charles A. Gonzalez
Member of Congress


Jo Ann Emerson
Member of Congress



Kenny C. Hirsch
Member of Congress


Jim Saxton
Member of Congress

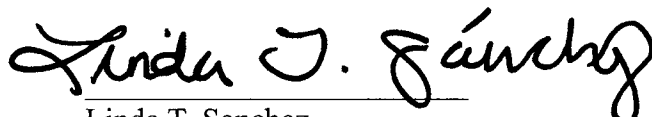

David Loebsack
Member of Congress



Dana Rohrabacher
Member of Congress



Doc Hastings
Member of Congress

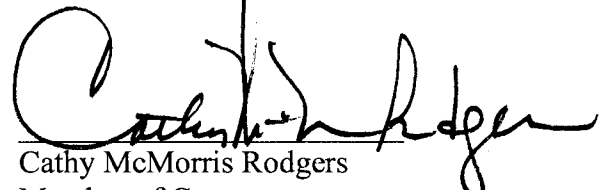

Rick Larsen
Member of Congress


Elton Gallegly
Member of Congress

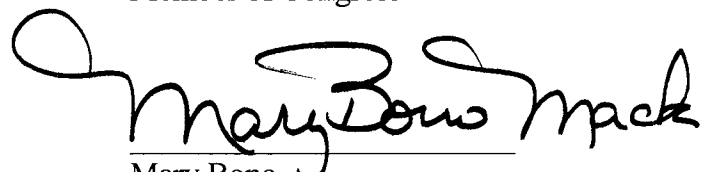

Linda T. Sanchez
Member of Congress

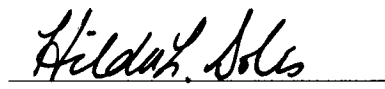

Trent Franks
Member of Congress


Norman D. Dicks
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress

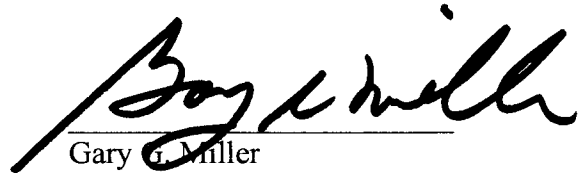

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress

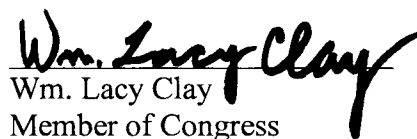

Mary Bono
Member of Congress

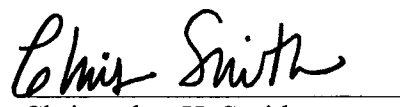

Hilda L. Solis
Member of Congress

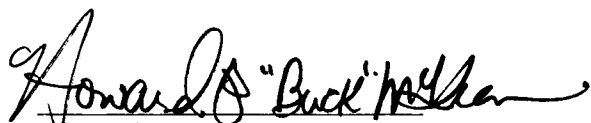

Tom Lantos
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Ken Calvert
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Gary G. Miller
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Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress


Christopher H. Smith
Member of Congress



Howard P. McKeon
Member of Congress



K. Michael Conaway
Member of Congress



Rob Bishop
Member of Congress



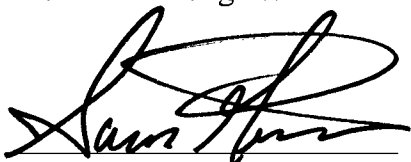
Russ Carnahan
Member of Congress



Ellen O. Tauscher
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Edward R. Royce
Member of Congress



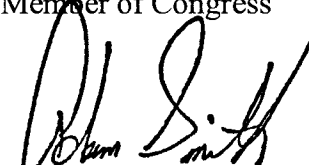
Sam Graves
Member of Congress



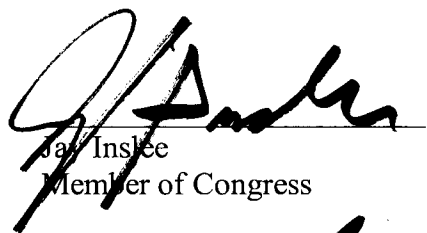
Darrell E. Issa
Member of Congress



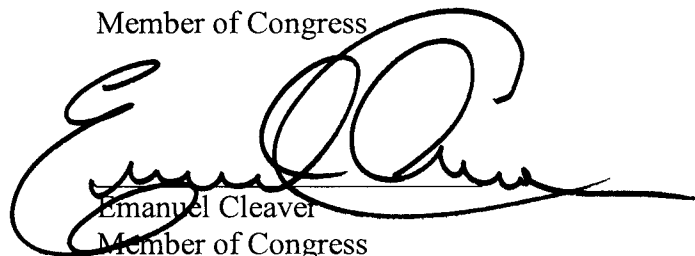
David G. Reichert
Member of Congress



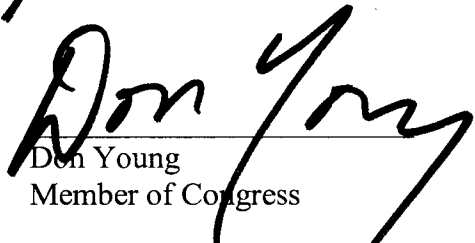
Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Jay Inslee
Member of Congress



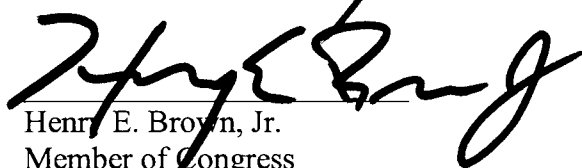
Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress



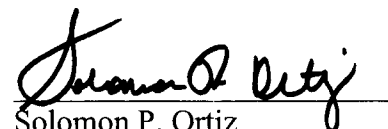
Don Young
Member of Congress



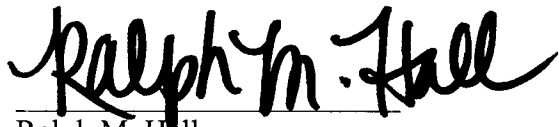
David L. Hobson
Member of Congress



Henry E. Brown, Jr.
Member of Congress



Solomon P. Ortiz
Member of Congress



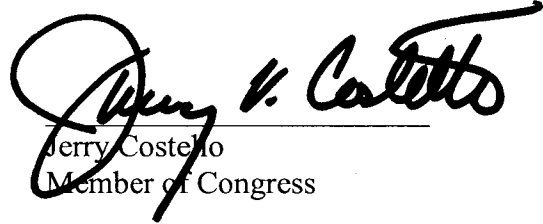
Ralph M. Hall
Member of Congress



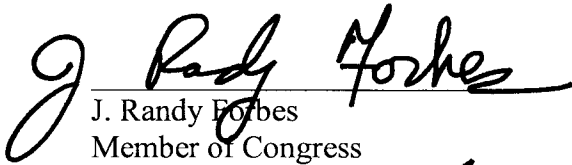
John L. Mica
Member of Congress



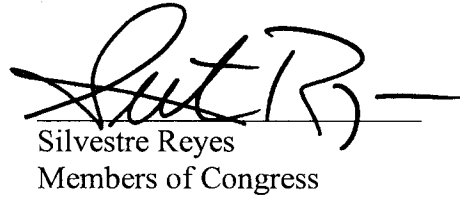
Donald A. Manzullo
Member of Congress



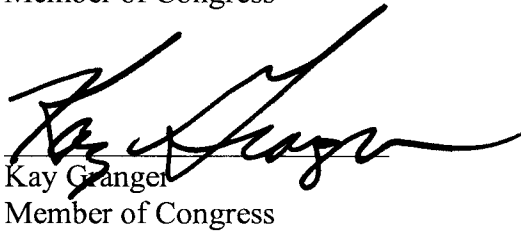
Jerry Costello
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J. Randy Forbes
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Silvestre Reyes
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Kay Granger
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