

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 15, 2016

The Honorable John Carter
Chairman
House Subcommittee on
Homeland Security Appropriations
B-307 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member
House Subcommittee on
Homeland Security Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Carter and Ranking Member Roybal-Allard,

As the Subcommittee considers the Department of Homeland Security's FY2017 Appropriations Bill, we write to urge the elimination of the requirement that ICE maintain 34,000 detention beds on a daily basis. This requirement, also referred to as the detention bed mandate, has been interpreted as requiring ICE to maintain an average daily population of approximately 34,000 individuals in detention.

The detention bed mandate is unprecedented. Indeed, no other law enforcement agency has a quota on the number of people they must keep in jail each day. Removing the mandate language from the appropriation's bill would bring ICE in line with the best practices of law enforcement agencies. These best practice focus on using detention beds based on actual need. The savings from removing the detention bed mandate would permit the Agency to focus limited resources on its many other responsibilities, including investigating drug smuggling, human trafficking, and child pornography.

The detention bed mandate is costly. We spend more than \$2 billion per year on immigration detention, or about \$5.05 million per day. A single detention bed is approximately \$126.46 per day. Mandating a specific number of detention beds prevents ICE from pursuing less costly alternatives to detention, including parole, supervised release, and community-based programs. Alternatives to detention range in cost between 70 cents and \$17 per day. Yet, the bed quota forces ICE to detain individuals, even in instances where alternatives would be appropriate.

It is past time that Congress ends this wasteful detention bed quota. We therefore respectfully request that the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Bill for FY2017 exclude the ICE immigration detention bed quota.

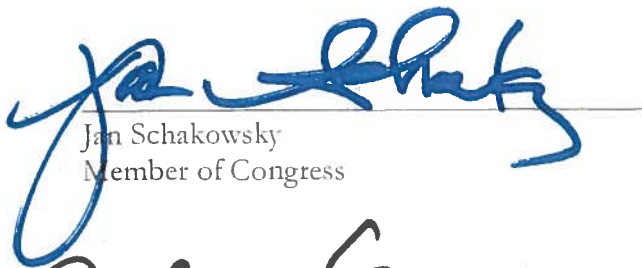
Sincerely,



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Member of Congress



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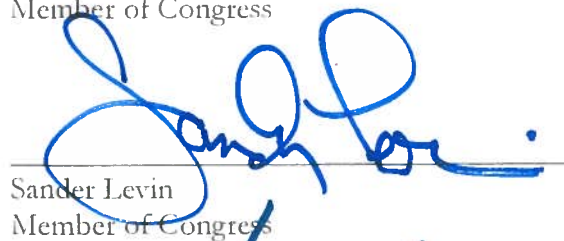
Gwen Moore
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Lloyd Doggett
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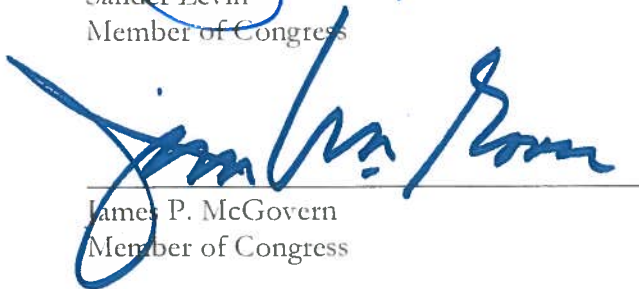
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Sander Levin
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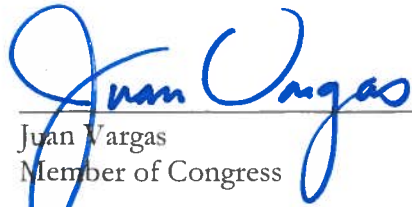
Alan Lowenthal
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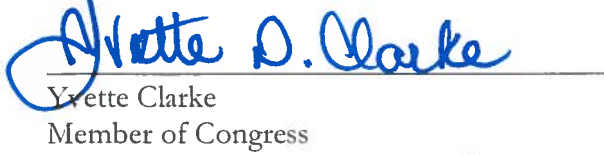
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Juan Vargas
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Mark Takano
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Yvette Clarke
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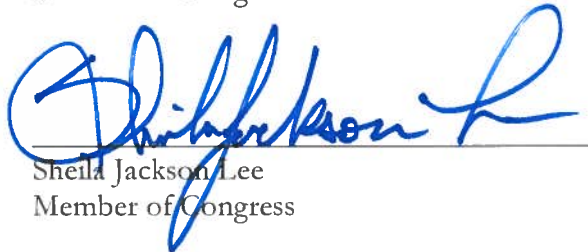

Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress

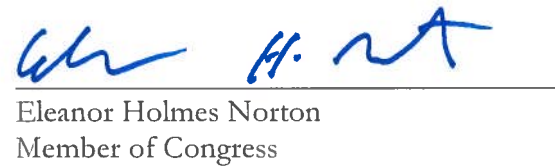

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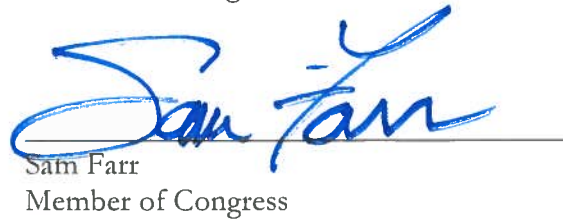

Sheila Jackson Lee
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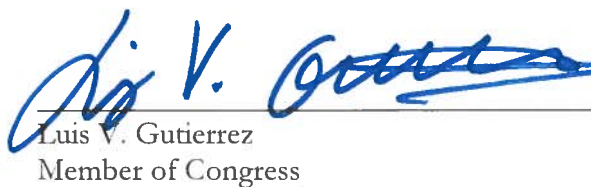

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