

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 23, 2010

The Honorable Barack H. Obama
President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

The United States Military is an institution that holds itself to the highest standards of dedication, bravery and sacrifice. We extend our prayers, resources and support to make sure these people are in every way recognized for the duty that they perform. It is therefore unacceptable that we maintain Don't Ask Don't Tell (DADT), a policy that denigrates thousands of service members.

Judge Virginia A. Phillips of the United States District Court of the Central District of California in *Log Cabin Republicans v. United States* recently ruled the DADT policy unconstitutional. Judge Phillips found DADT violated both the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment and the right to free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. In her decision she highlighted not only the lack of government need to intrude on the personal lives of lesbians and gay men, but also its deleterious effect on the government's interest in maintaining military readiness and unit cohesion. In contrast, she found that any defense of DADT lacked an empirical foundation for its pervasive and undermining effects.

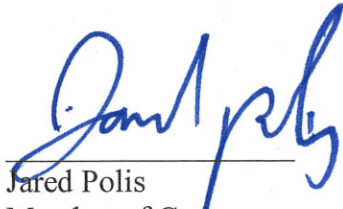
Some of the most accomplished and lauded members of our military are gay. Air Force Reserve Major Margaret Witt is one of those talented defenders of peace who has suffered at the hand of the DADT policy. After providing 17 years of service to the United States air force, receiving regular recognition for her devotion and excellence, Major Witt was discharged after it was discovered that she was a lesbian. Her worth to the military and the American people was outweighed by her sexual orientation. Her story is not uncommon, and neither is the unnecessary grief and hardship that is added to the shoulders of the gay and lesbian members of our military.

According to a 2010 report by the Williams Institute, there are approximately 66,000 lesbian and gay individuals currently serving in the U.S. Armed Forces. Since DADT passed into law in 1993, over 14,000 lesbian and gay service members have been discharged, including nearly 1,000 specialists with rare, mission critical skills. With this in mind, we urge you to follow through with your promise to the American people to work to end this unacceptable practice and refuse to submit an appeal defending DADT. An appeal is neither in the government's interest nor is it a compulsory legal burden. Prominent Harvard Law School professor, Laurence Tribe, who argued against the constitutionality of the Defense of Marriage Act, agrees that "there certainly are cases where the government declines to defend the law."

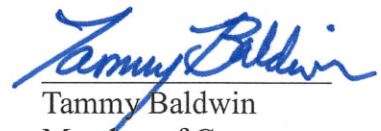
Mr. President, in this critical time when military readiness is paramount we must recognize the importance of every linguist, flight nurse and infantryman. As you announced our official end of combat operations in Iraq we must prepare for what is to come. To stay above the rest, to remain the most formidable military force in the world, we must innovate, change and grow. As we update our weaponry and strategy, so too must we open our policy to encourage as much cohesiveness and camaraderie as possible. In the military where lives rely on trust and determination, DADT represents neither.

We consider this matter a top priority to our service members, the American people and the security of the United States. We acknowledge and appreciate your support and hope that together we can end this dishonorable policy once and for all. We hope that you, as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Services, will take this opportunity to restore integrity to our military and decline to appeal Judge Phillips' ruling.

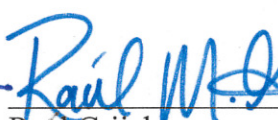
Yours truly,

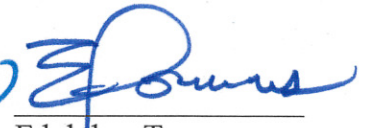

Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Barney Frank
Member of Congress



Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

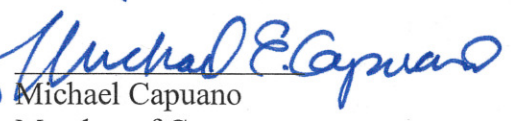

Jim Moran
Member of Congress


Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress


Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress

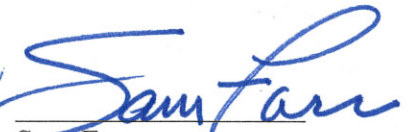

Michael McMahon
Member of Congress



Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress


Michael Capuano
Member of Congress



Rush Holt
Member of Congress

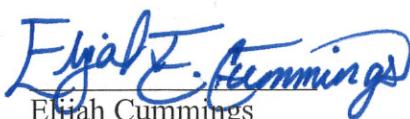

Michael Honda
Member of Congress

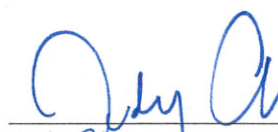

Sam Farr
Member of Congress

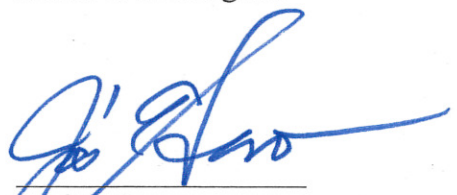

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress


Peter Stark
Member of Congress

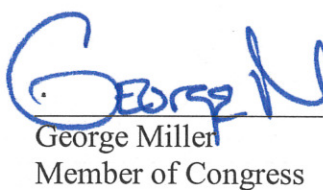

Linda Sanchez
Member of Congress

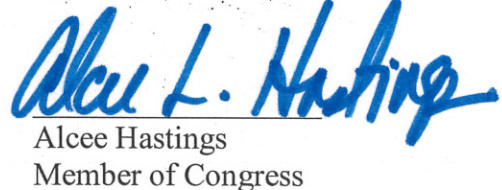

Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress

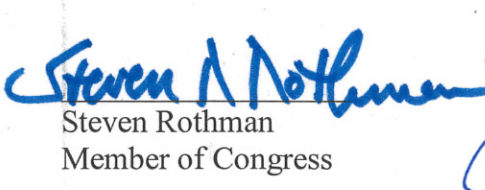

Judy Chu
Member of Congress

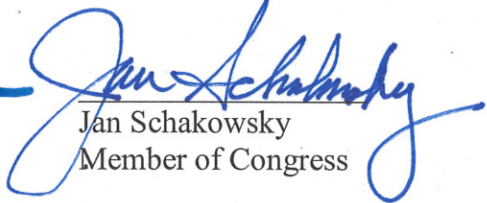

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress

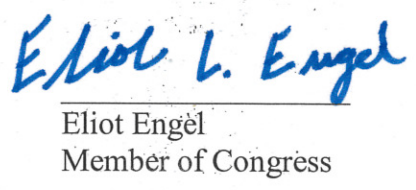

Mary Jo Kilroy
Member of Congress


George Miller
Member of Congress

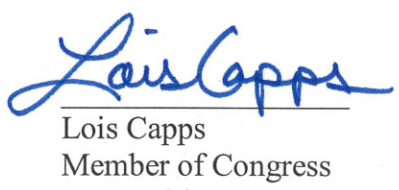

Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress


Steven Rothman
Member of Congress

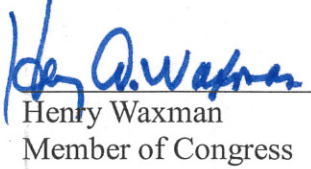

Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress

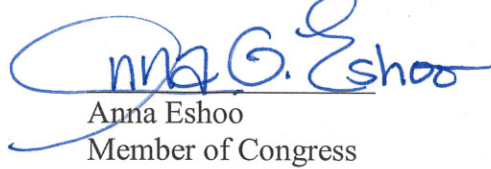

Eliot Engel
Member of Congress


Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

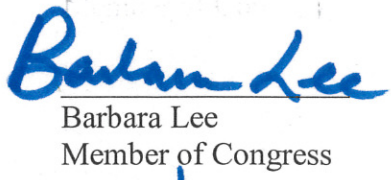

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

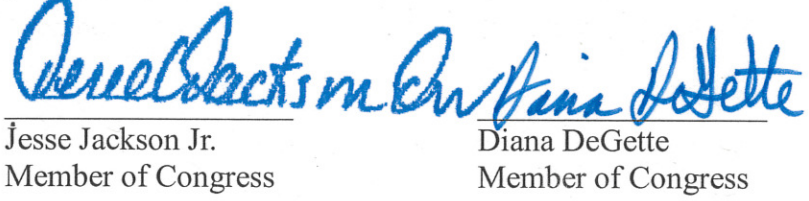

Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress

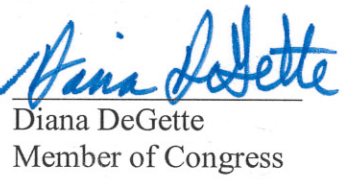

Henry Waxman
Member of Congress

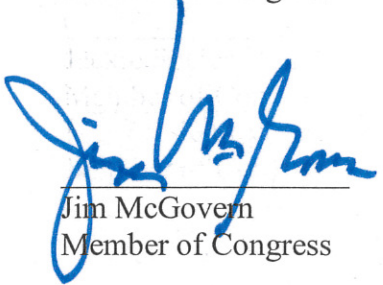

Anna Eshoo
Member of Congress

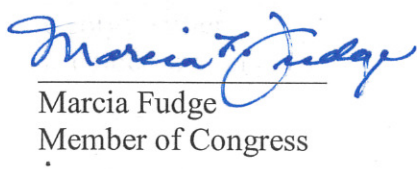

David Wu
Member of Congress

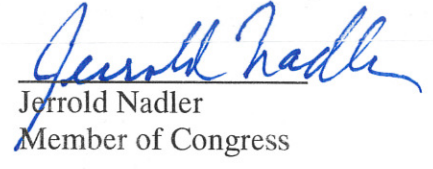

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

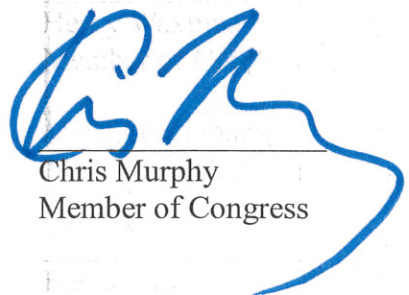

Jesse Jackson Jr.
Member of Congress

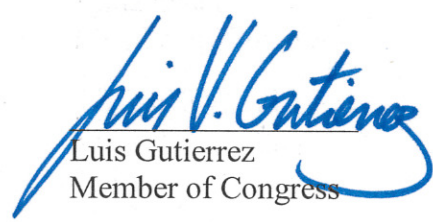

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

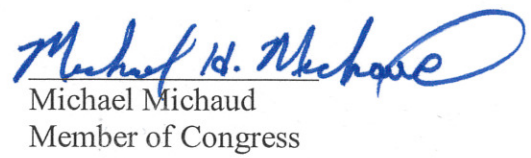

Jim McGovern
Member of Congress

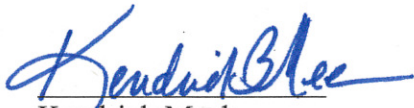

Marcia Fudge
Member of Congress


Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

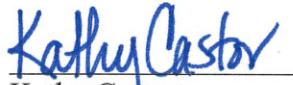

Chris Murphy
Member of Congress


Luis Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



Kendrick Meek
Member of Congress



Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



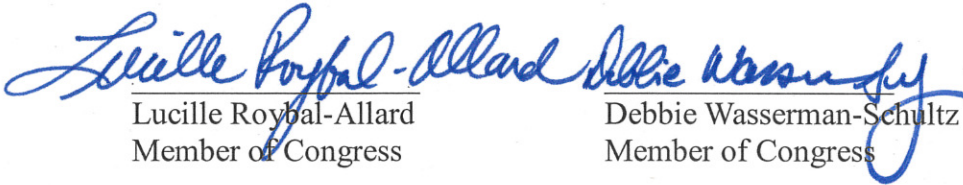
Maurice Hinchey
Member of Congress



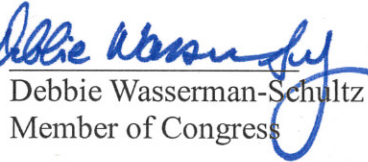
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



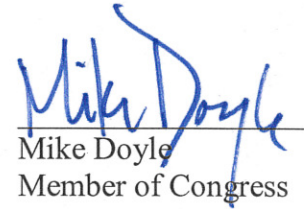
Ron Klein
Member of Congress



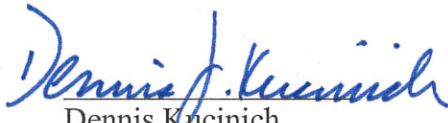
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman-Schultz
Member of Congress



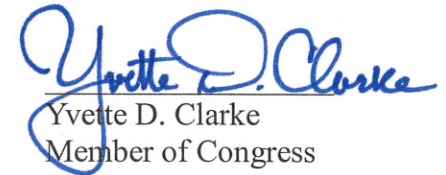
Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress



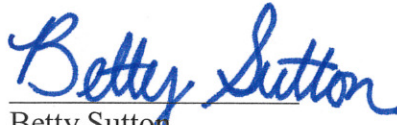
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



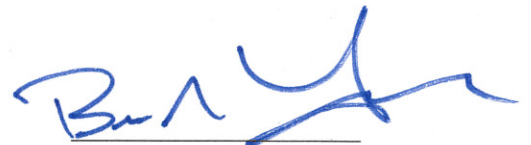
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



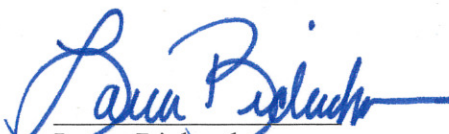
Dan Maffei
Member of Congress



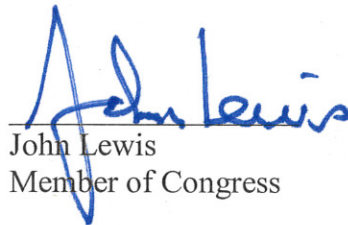
Betty Sutton
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress



Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



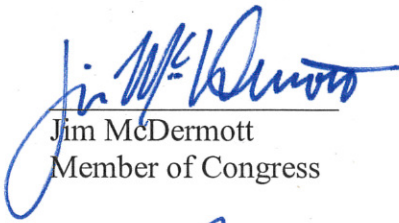
Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress




Theodore Deutch
Member of Congress




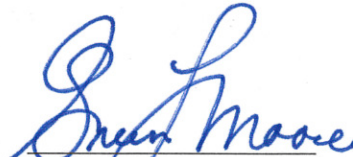
Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

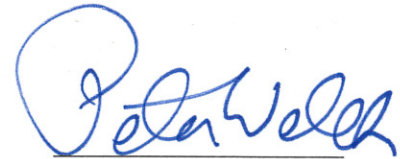

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Albio Sires
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

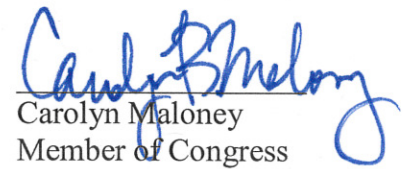

Anthony Weiner
Member of Congress


Gwen Moore
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress


Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress


Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress