Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 28, 2015

The Honorable John Boehner
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Speaker Boehner and Leader Pelosi,

We write with increasing urgency about our nation's approach to gun violence. In the wake of a seemingly endless string of horrific mass shootings, Americans from diverse backgrounds and differing political beliefs have demanded that their elected leaders take action to keep our neighborhoods and communities safe. The inescapable truth is that each year, approximately 32,000 Americans die from gun violence—the highest death rate in the developed world.

Although Members of Congress may disagree about how best to respond to this problem, we should all be able to agree that our response should be informed by sound scientific evidence. That is why we are calling on you to take one simple step to help reduce the possibility of future tragedies like those in Roseburg, Charleston, Newtown, Aurora, and countless other American communities: lift the prohibition on federally funded research on gun violence in any final fiscal year 2016 appropriations legislation.

As you are aware, these annual policy riders—known as the "Dickey Amendments" and "Rehberg Amendments"—have in practice prohibited the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other agencies falling under the Department of Health and Human Services from conducting publicly funded scientific research on the causes of gun violence or its effects on public health. There is no valid reason not to fund this research. Earlier this year, Democrats offered an amendment at the Appropriations Committee markup to strike these harmful riders, but it was rejected on a largely partisan vote.

Whether it is horrific headline-generating massacres or the unseen violence that occurs every day in our districts—the innocent child gunned down in the crossfire, the mother murdered during a domestic dispute, or the young life cut tragically short during the heat of a petty argument—the call to action is clear. Instead of turning a blind eye to our country's disproportionately high incidence of gun violence, let's investigate evidence-based solutions that will help prevent violence while still protecting the rights of law-abiding gun owners. We strongly urge House leadership to reject short-sighted and unnecessary riders that freeze gun violence research.

Sincerely,

DAVID PRICE

ROSA DELAURO

NITA LOWEY

MIKE QUIGLEY

ROBIN KELLY

PRINTED ON RECYCLED PAPER

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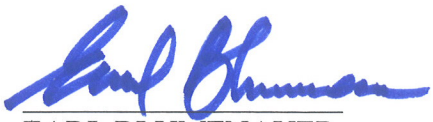
DON BEYER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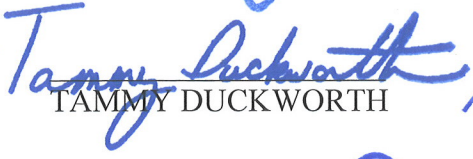
SUZANNE BONAMICI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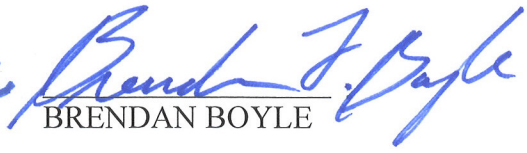
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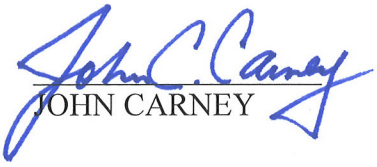
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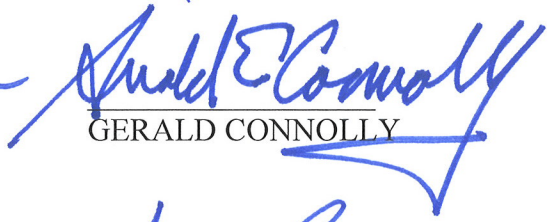
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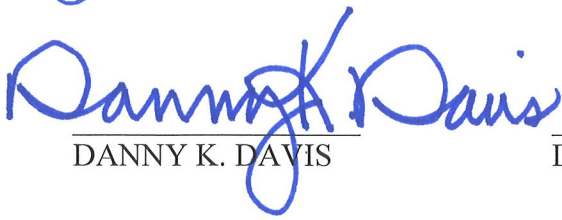
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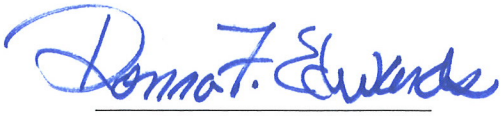
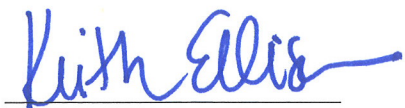

DONNA EDWARDS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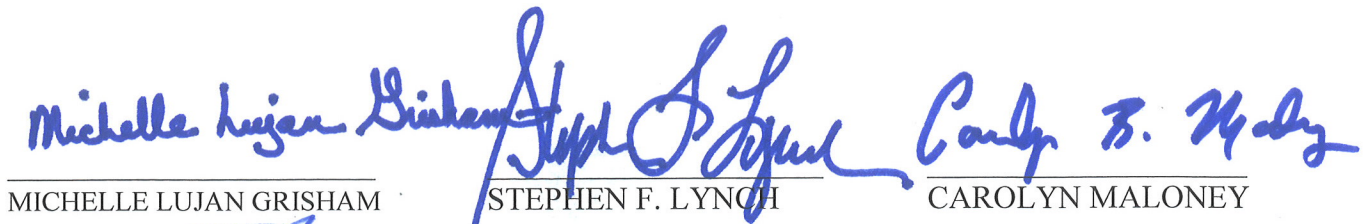

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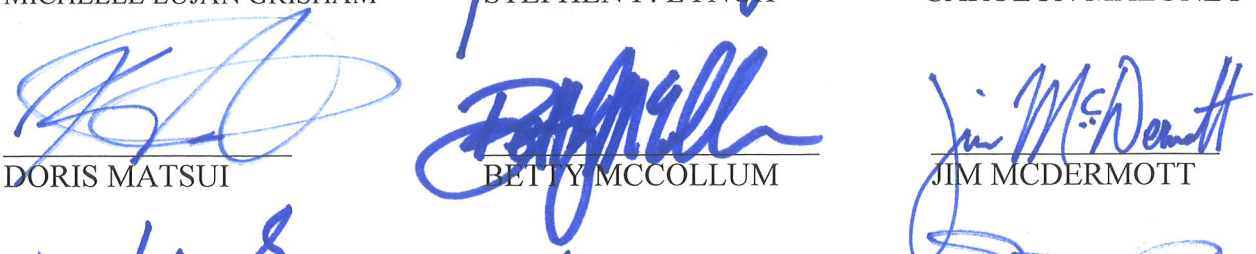

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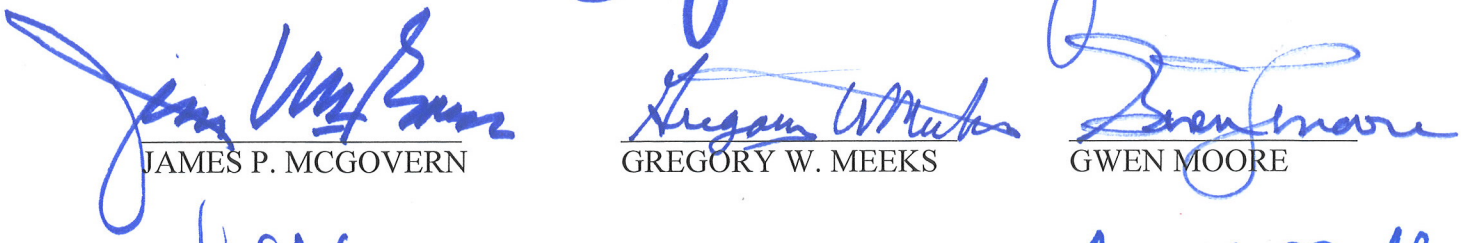

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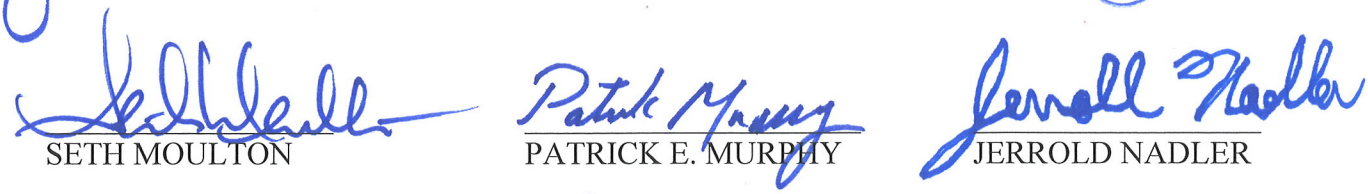

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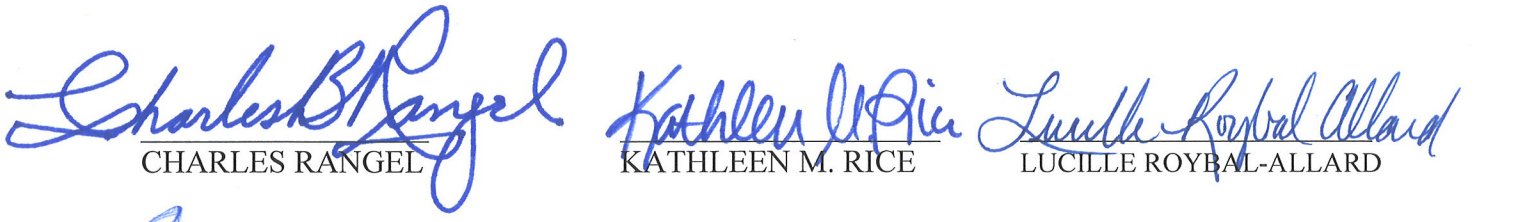

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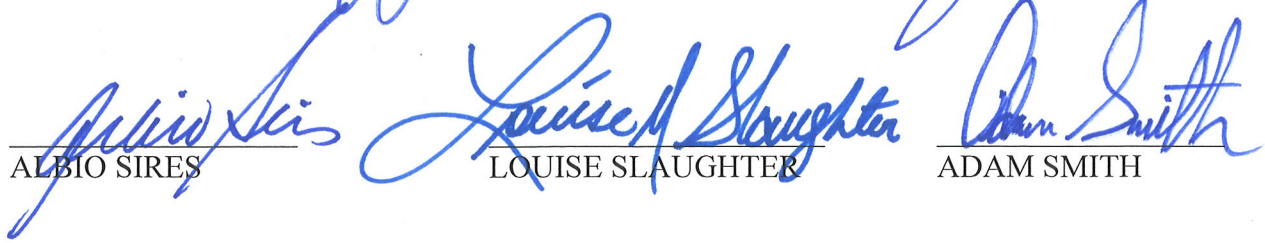
ADAM B. SCHIFF | BOBBY SCOTT | JOSÉ SERRANO



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