

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

February 19, 2014

President Barack Obama
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20500

Dear Mr. President:

We write to urge you to rule out using the chained Consumer Price Index (CPI) to calculate cost-of-living and inflation adjustments for federal programs in your Budget for Fiscal Year 2015.

Switching to a chained CPI would be devastating for seniors, veterans, federal retirees, disabled individuals and others. Under legislation enacted in 1983, Social Security benefits for seniors retiring in the coming years are already scheduled to be reduced. Today, the average worker earning \$43,000 annually who retires at age 65 will find that Social Security replaces 41 percent of their previous earnings. Soon, this will decline to just 36 percent of previous earnings, as the full retirement age climbs from 66 to 67 over the 2017-2022 period.

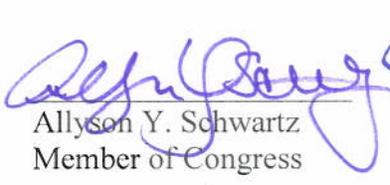
Chained CPI would further reduce those earned benefits over time because it fails to take into account inflation for older Americans. While the Affordable Care Act has had a positive effect in reducing Medicare spending growth, increased medical costs continue to take a larger and larger share of Social Security earned benefits. As you know, many seniors already face tight personal budgets, challenges that the recession has only exacerbated. For many seniors living on a fixed income, any reduction in benefits would have a serious impact on their ability to afford basic necessities.

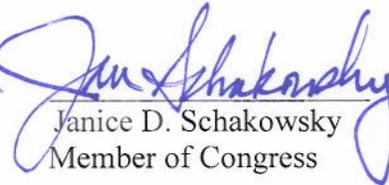
While there have been protections proposed to mitigate the impact of chained CPI on the very elderly and certain vulnerable populations, such as the blind, disabled and seniors with limited income, many with limited, modest incomes would still be impacted. For instance, even with the benefit enhancements that have been proposed, a low-wage retiree receiving \$9,600 per year would see their benefits reduced by an average of 1.5 percent between ages 62 and 81, a loss of more than \$140 per year.

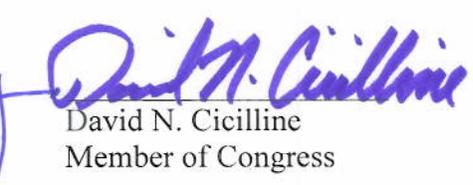
Your Budget for Fiscal Year 2014 proposed a comprehensive \$1.8 trillion deficit reduction package that sought to replace sequestration and reflected the compromise you offered to House Speaker John Boehner in December 2012. That plan incorporated a Republican proposal to use chained CPI to reduce cost-of-living increases for Social Security recipients, as well as military veterans, people with disabilities, and beneficiaries of other federal programs. Since then, however, the Republican majority has consistently refused to discuss a balanced approach that would include increased revenues and the closing of tax loopholes.

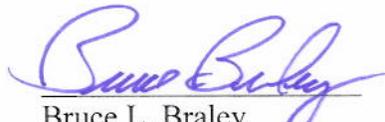
We recognize that additional measures are required to address our nation's long-term budget challenges, and we appreciate the difficult choices you are wrestling with as you prepare a fiscal blueprint to promote economic growth. But, we respectfully ask that you not place the burden of additional deficit reduction on the backs of seniors, veterans, federal retirees, disabled individuals and others by including chained CPI in your Budget for Fiscal Year 2015.

Sincerely,


Allyson Y. Schwartz
Member of Congress


Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress


David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress


Bruce L. Braley
Member of Congress

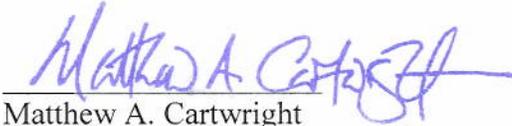

Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



Ron Barber
Member of Congress



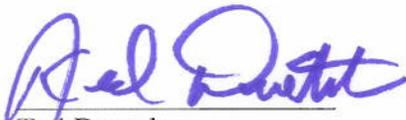
Tony Cardenas
Member of Congress



Matthew A. Cartwright
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



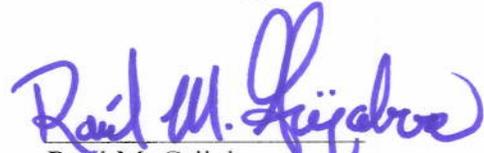
Ted Deutch
Member of Congress



William L. Enyart
Member of Congress



Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



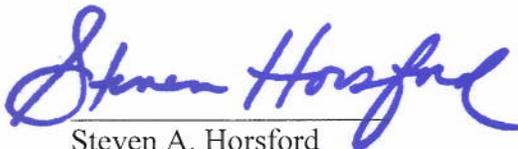
Raul M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



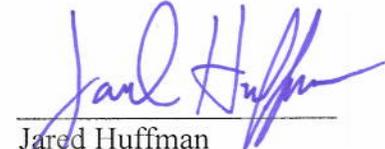
Rush Holt
Member of Congress



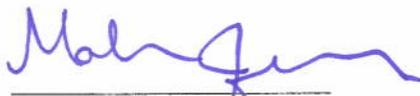
Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



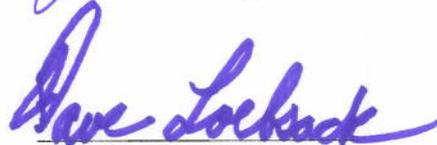
Steven A. Horsford
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



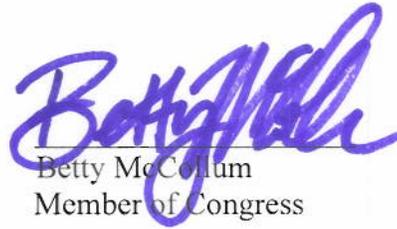
Hakeem S. Jeffries
Member of Congress



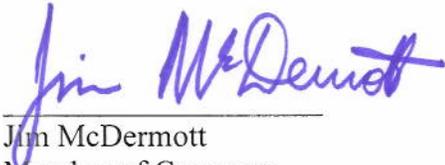
Dave Loebsack
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



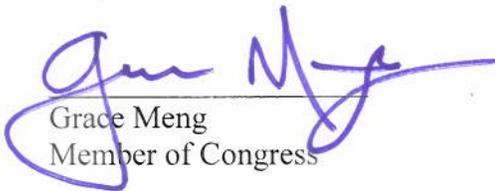
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



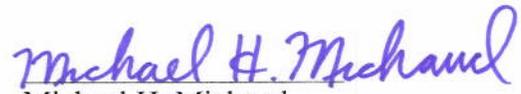
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



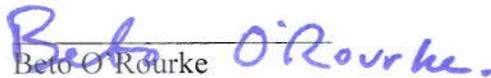
Gloria Negrete McLeod
Member of Congress



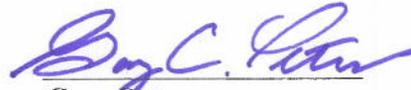
Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Michael H. Michaud
Member of Congress



Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress



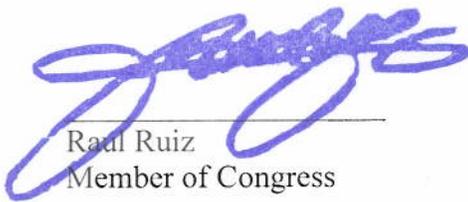
Gary Peters
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



Raul Ruiz
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Carol Shea-Porter
Member of Congress

Mark Takano

Mark Takano
Member of Congress

Juan Vargas

Juan Vargas
Member of Congress

Robert A. Brady

Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress

Lloyd Doggett

Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress

Michael F. Doyle

Michael F. Doyle
Member of Congress

Elizabeth H. Esty

Elizabeth Esty
Member of Congress

Alan Grayson

Alan Grayson
Member of Congress

Colleen W. Hanabusa

Colleen W. Hanabusa
Member of Congress

Daniel T. Kildee

Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress

James R. Langevin

James R. Langevin
Member of Congress

John Lewis

John Lewis
Member of Congress

Alan S. Lowenthal

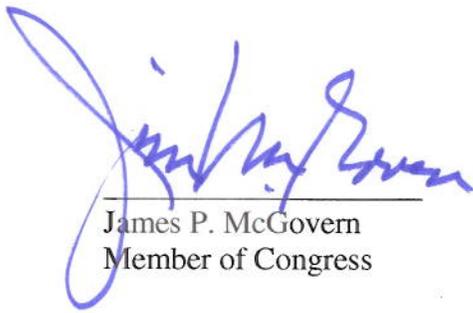
Alan S. Lowenthal
Member of Congress

Michelle Lujan Grisham

Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress

Dan Maffei

Dan Maffei
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
Member of Congress



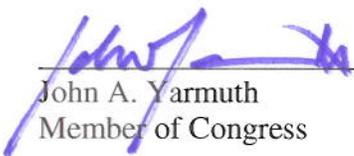
Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Dina Titus
Member of Congress



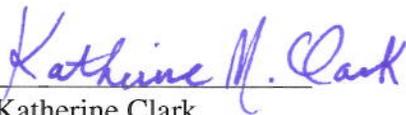
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



John A. Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



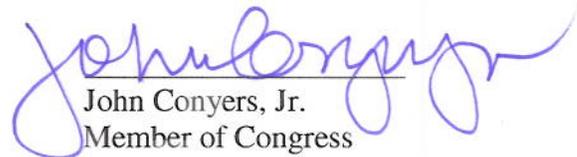
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



WM. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



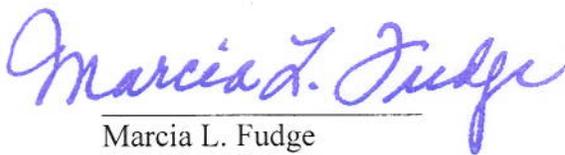
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



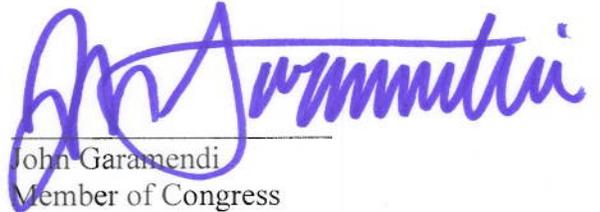
Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



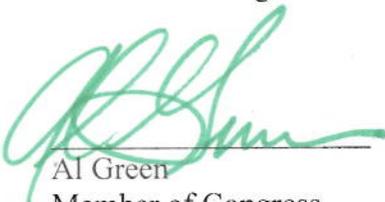
Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



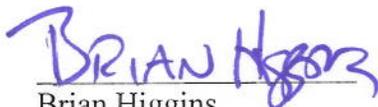
Gene Green
Member of Congress



Luis V. Gutierrez
Member of Congress



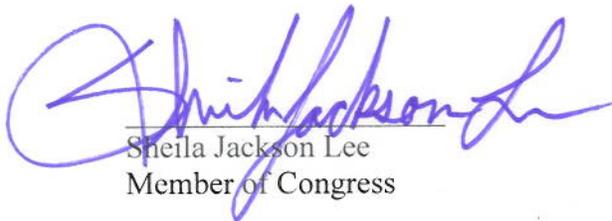
Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress



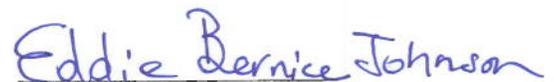
Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



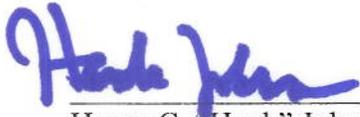
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



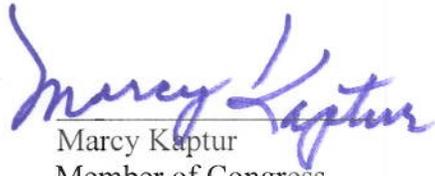
Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



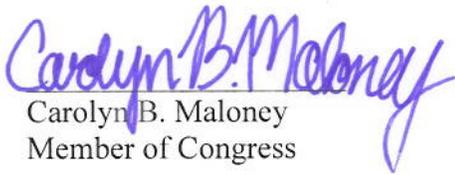
Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



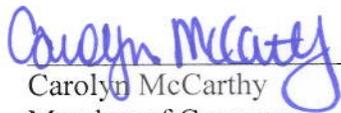
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



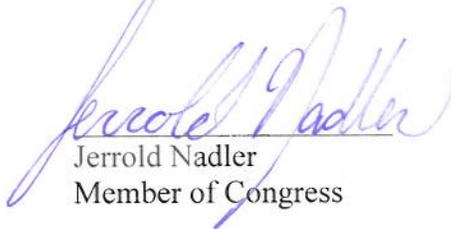
Doris O. Matsui
Member of Congress



Carolyn McCarthy
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



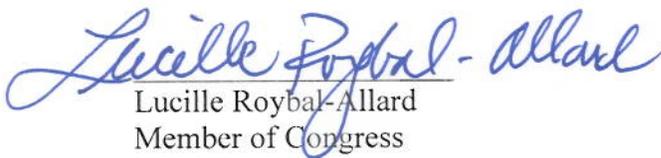
Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress



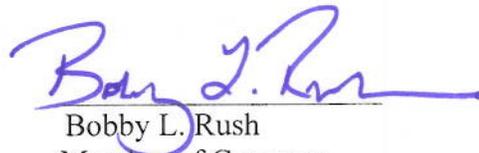
Collin Peterson
Member of Congress



Nick J. Rahall
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress

Linda J. Sanchez

Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress

J.P. Sarbanes

John P. Sarbanes
Member of Congress

Adam B. Schiff

Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress

Jose E. Serrano

Jose E. Serrano
Member of Congress

Emanuel Cleaver

Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress

Albio Sires

Albio Sires
Member of Congress

Louise M. Slaughter

Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress

Paul D. Tonko

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress

Maxine Waters

Maxine Waters
Member of Congress

Peter Welch

Peter Welch
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Andre Carson

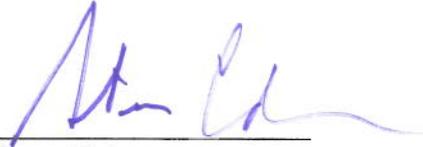
Andre Carson
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone

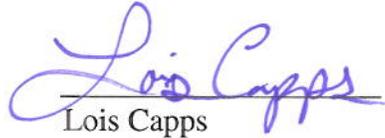
Frank Pallone
Member of Congress

Charles B. Rangel

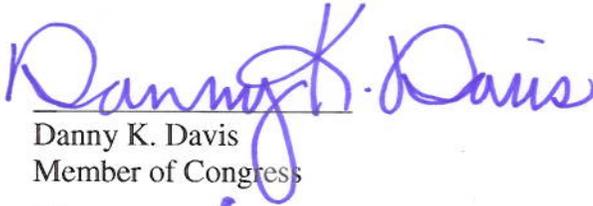
Charlie B. Rangel
Member of Congress



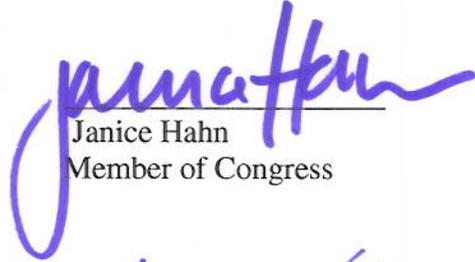
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



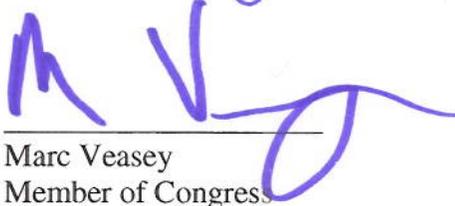
Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



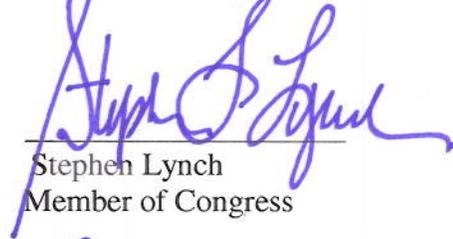
Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



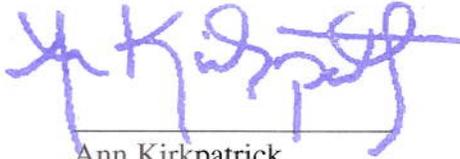
Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress



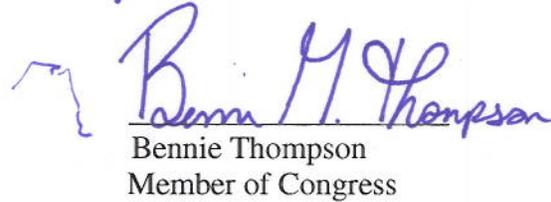
Robin Kelly
Member of Congress



Stephen Lynch
Member of Congress



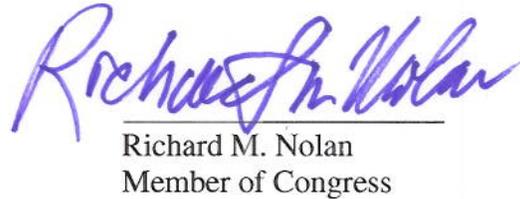
Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Bennie Thompson
Member of Congress



William Keating
Member of Congress



Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress