

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 24, 2023

The Honorable Mark Amodei
Chairman
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
House Appropriations Committee
104 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adriano Espaillat
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on the Legislative Branch
House Appropriations Committee
2332 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Amodei and Ranking Member Espaillat,

As you consider the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Legislative Branch appropriations bill, we respectfully request funding be maintained at FY 2023 levels to ensure that interns compensated through the House intern allowance are able to be paid a livable wage.

We applaud the committee's work last year to raise funding for intern compensation from the FY22 levels of \$35,000 per office to the FY23 levels of \$46,800 per office. Maintaining this funding level compensates the thousands of students and recent graduates who come to Capitol Hill to learn about and serve in Congress. The District of Columbia is frequently ranked in the top 10 most expensive cities in the U.S., making an unpaid or low-paying internship an insurmountable hurdle for far too many would-be applicants.

According to a March 2021 report from the nonprofit Pay Our Interns, the average total stipend per intern was \$1,612.53 in the House, which is insufficient to cover living and working expenses in the Washington D.C. area. Unpaid and low-paying internships severely limit opportunities for those who want to serve but who cannot afford to take these positions. The same report found that people of color are significantly underrepresented in paid internships in the House, comprising just 23% of all paid interns. These numbers reflect the reality that underpaying interns is a disproportionate barrier for people of color seeking internship and career opportunities in the House.

For offices that offer full-time internship opportunities throughout the year, the total amount appropriated for the House intern account, as well as the monthly \$1,800 cap on the amount offices are able to compensate interns, limits the ability of offices to compensate their interns with a living wage.

Furthermore, the current inability to move any funds from the Member's Representational Allowance (MRA) into the intern fund inhibits an office's ability to supplement their intern funds in a way that does not count against their payroll headcount cap. Many offices currently use the MRA to pay some interns, but each fairly-paid intern takes a slot that could be allocated to staff, shared staff, and caucus dues, thus limiting the number of interns payable under such an arrangement. By seeding the intern pay fund with MRA funds, we will be more able to compensate all interns for their work.

We encourage investigation into both the monthly cap on intern pay and the ability to transfer funds from the MRA into the intern allowance, in the hopes that we will be able to offer our interns fairer pay that does not interact with headcount concerns.

From appropriators, we respectfully request that the funding allowance for interns in FY 2024 be set at no less than \$46,800 in a calendar year for House offices. This will ensure that all House offices will be able to compensate one full-time intern and one part time intern working 50% of the time year-round each at a wage of \$15 per hour.

The support provided by interns to Members and their staff is critical to the smooth functioning of House offices. Additionally, Congress bears a responsibility to make internships, the first foray into public service for many people, an accessible, affordable opportunity for all, regardless of background. For these reasons, we urge the Subcommittee to provide sufficient funds for House interns to earn a livable wage, which will help to make Congressional internships an attractive and feasible option for a more diverse pool of applicants.

We appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton
Member of Congress




Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



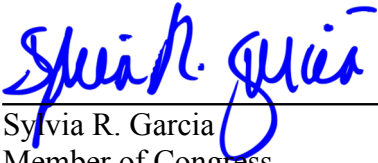
Vicente Gonzalez
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



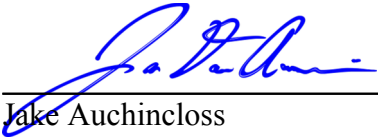
Chrissy Houlahan
Member of Congress



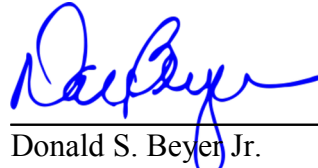
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



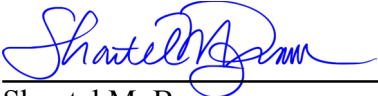
Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



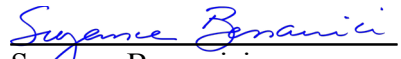
Jake Auchincloss
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



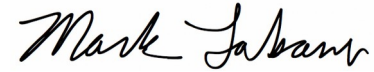
Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress

André Carson

André Carson
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



J. Luis Correa
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



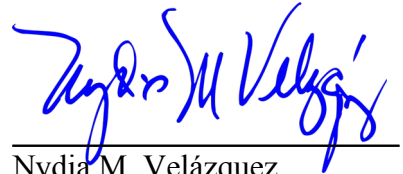
Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



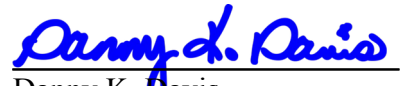
Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
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Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



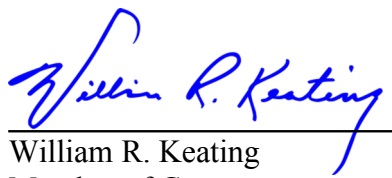
Paul D. Tonko
Member of Congress



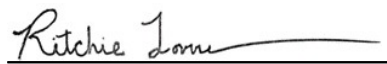
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



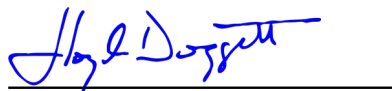
Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



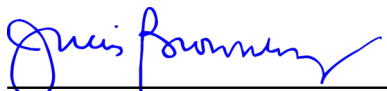
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



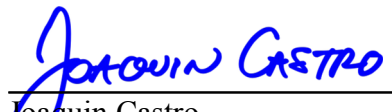
Ritchie Torres
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



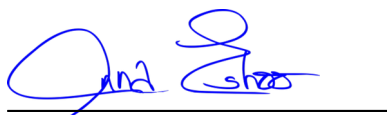
Joaquin Castro
Member of Congress



Dean Phillips
Member of Congress



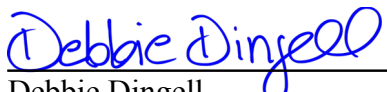
Marilyn Strickland
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



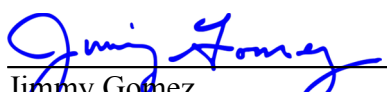
Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



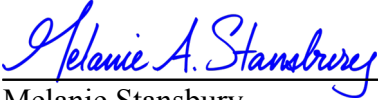
Jimmy Gomez
Member of Congress



Jim Costa
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver, II
Member of Congress



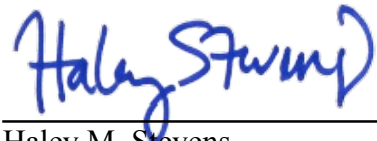
Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



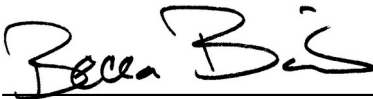
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



MIKE LEVIN
Member of Congress



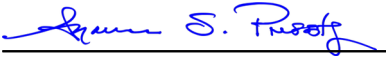
Richard E. Neal
Member of Congress
, Committee on Ways and
Means



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



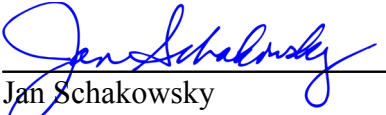
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress




Ayanna Pressley
Member of Congress



Katie Porter
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



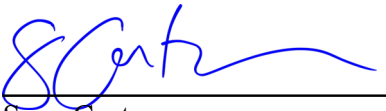
Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress



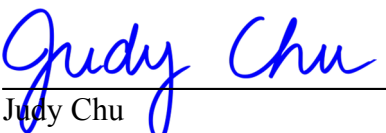
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Gregorio Kilili Camacho
Sablan
Member of Congress



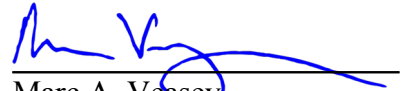
Judy Chu
Member of Congress



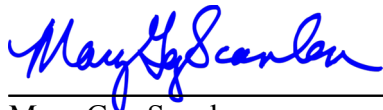
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Mike Thompson
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



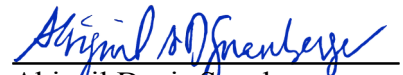
Mary Gay Scanlon
Member of Congress



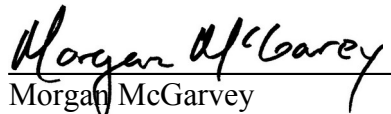
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



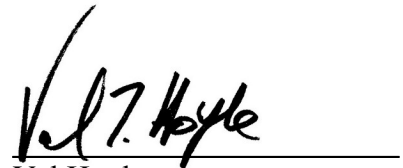
Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



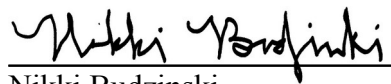
Abigail Davis Spanberger
Member of Congress



Morgan McGarvey
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



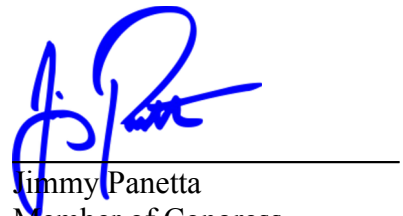
Nikki Budzinski



Al Green
Member of Congress



Jim Tokuda
Member of Congress



Jimmy Panetta
Member of Congress



Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Jason Crow
Member of Congress



Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Bradley Scott Schneider
Member of Congress



Kim Schrier, M.D.
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



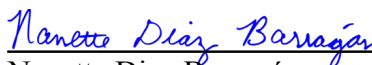
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



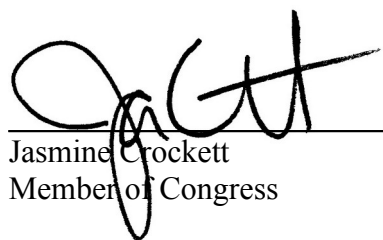
Troy Carter
Member of Congress



Cori Bush
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



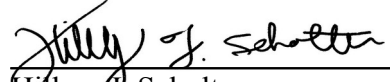
Jasmine Crockett
Member of Congress



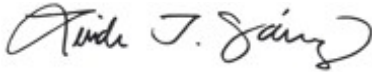
David Scott
Member of Congress



Chris Deluzio
Member of Congress



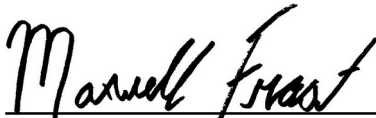
Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



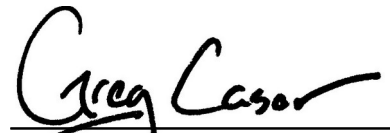
Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Madeleine Dean
Member of Congress



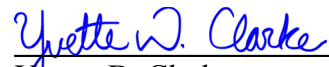
Maxwell Alejandro Frost
Member of Congress



Greg Casar
Member of Congress



Wiley Nickel
Member of Congress



Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



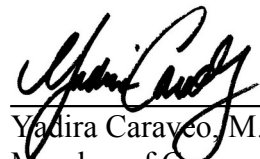
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



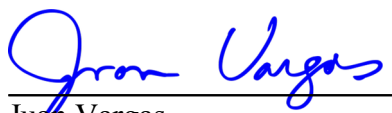
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



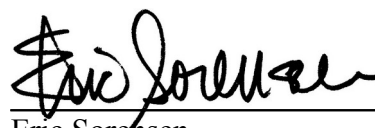
Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Yadira Caraveo, M.D.
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



Eric Sorensen
Member of Congress



Colin Z. Alfred
Member of Congress



Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



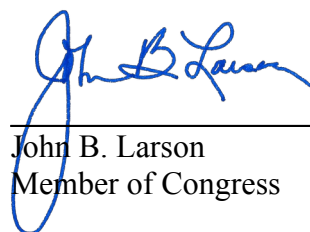
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



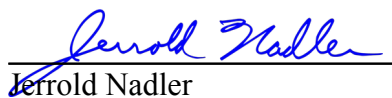
Jared Moskowitz
Member of Congress



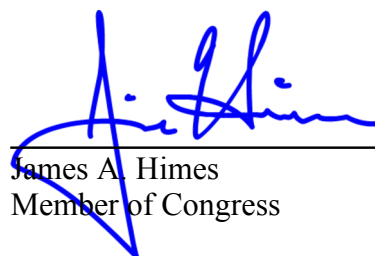
Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



James A. Himes
Member of Congress



Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



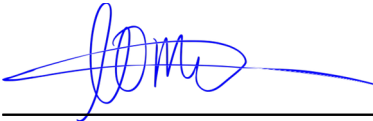
Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



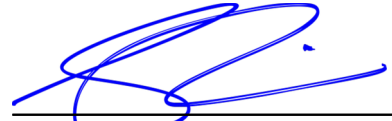
Summer Lee
Member of Congress



Elissa Slotkin
Member of Congress



Ilhan Omar
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress