

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 16, 2018

The Honorable John Culberson
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
H-310 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable José Serrano
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Commerce,
Justice, Science, and Related Agencies
H-310 The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Culberson and Ranking Member Serrano,

We write to thank you for your leadership and commitment to ensuring safe and dignified workplaces free of harassment and discrimination. Over the past several months, workers across the country have come forward with their own harrowing stories of sexual abuse and harassment in the workplace. In light of this, we are concerned that the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) does not have sufficient resources to fulfill its mandate to enforce anti-discrimination and harassment laws. As you negotiate funding for Fiscal Year 2019 appropriations, we urge you to expand funding for the EEOC so that it can properly protect workers and hold perpetrators accountable.

From the factory floor to the hotel room, the restaurant kitchen to the farm field, workers are speaking out against sexual harassment and discrimination and refusing to accept business as usual. Titans of industry are being held accountable, and a new day is on the horizon. Still, for many workers, justice has not been served.

The EEOC is the venue for many of these workers to pursue justice. It is responsible for enforcing federal laws against discrimination of a job applicant or employee due to the individual's race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability or genetic information. In addition to investigating claims, the EEOC litigates cases, conducts federal sector oversight, and provides education and trainings for employers and stakeholders.

Unfortunately, the EEOC lacks the resources to fulfill its important duties. In fact, the EEOC has not received a budget increase since FY2010, and has the lowest number of full-time employees in nearly 30 years. In FY2017, the EEOC received nearly 85,000 charges. It is also working diligently with limited resources to reduce a backlog of more than 60,000 charges. Due to understaffing, each investigator has an average workload of 125 rolling charges, and it takes an average of 295 days to resolve a claim.

Before the Committee on House Administration, Acting Chair of the EEOC Victoria Lipnic recently testified: "When I first joined the EEOC, ... I spoke with every one of our District Directors around the country ... and all of our Regional Attorneys. I was astonished, but also deeply concerned ... I was told the same thing: the EEOC could, if it wanted to, have a docket consisting of nothing but harassment cases generally, and sexual harassment cases specifically." Notably, Chair Lipnic was referring to conditions in 2010 when the EEOC had more funding and 300 more full-time employees.

While we support the chorus of survivors breaking their silence, we are concerned that the EEOC will not be able to shoulder the increased demand for its services with its current budget. In the month following the Weinstein allegations published in the *New York Times*, average visits to the EEOC's website seeking information about sexual harassment nearly tripled. Current wait times to speak with a representative on the EEOC's 1-800 hotline are 45 minutes to an hour. For workers finding the courage to come forward, these roadblocks are damaging and may discourage the pursuit of justice.

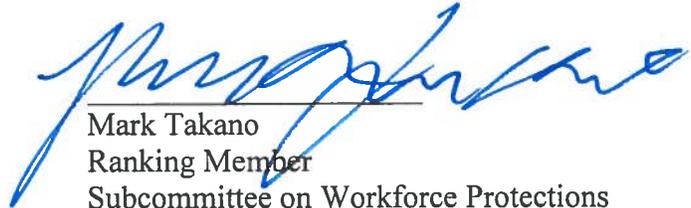
In addition to lacking resources to properly assist survivors coming forward, the EEOC also has insufficient funding to conduct its important preventative work. In its recently adopted Strategic Plan for 2018-2022, the Commission identified three strategic objectives, including “Prevent[ing] Employment Discrimination Through Education and Outreach.” This preventative work includes providing education and trainings for employers and employees. However, due to insufficient funding, the EEOC’s training staff will soon lack the capacity to meet increased demand for its new training on respectful workplaces.

Sexual harassment is more than inappropriate misconduct – it is an abuse of power with serious economic consequences. It deprives workers of their freedom to put food on the table, pay their bills and advance in their professions. We urge you to provide robust funding for the EEOC so that men and women can work side by side in safety and dignity, with equal opportunity and fair treatment.

Sincerely,



Lois Frankel
Chair
Democratic Women’s Working Group



Mark Takano
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Workforce Protections



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



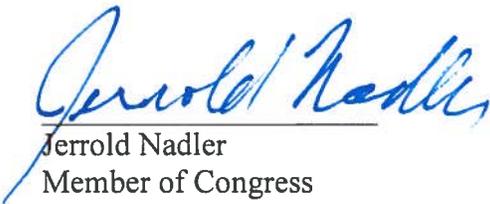
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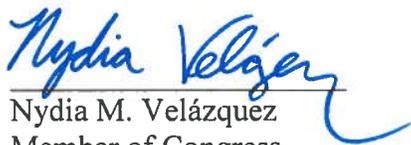
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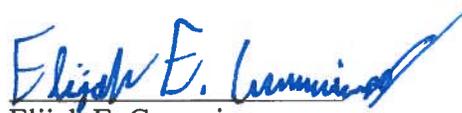
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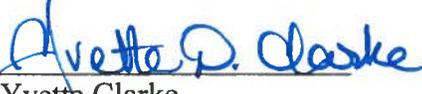
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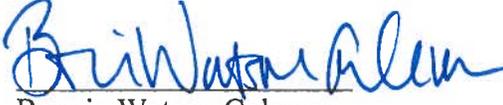
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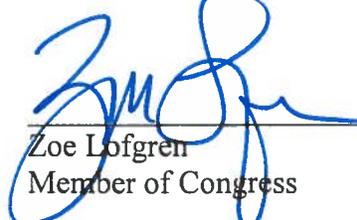

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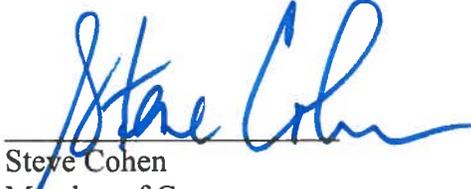

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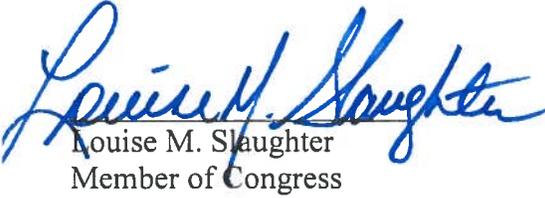

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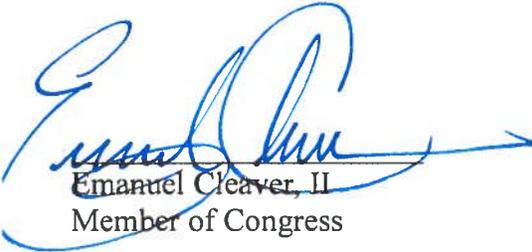

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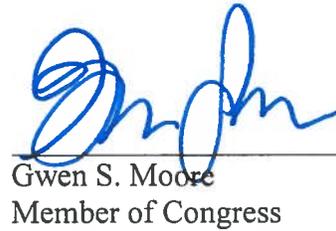

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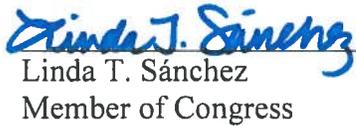

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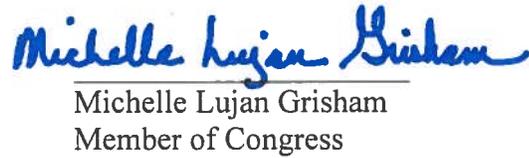

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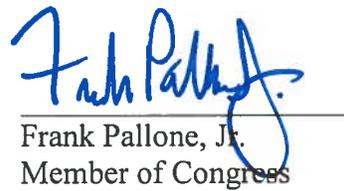

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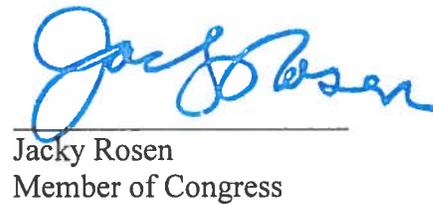

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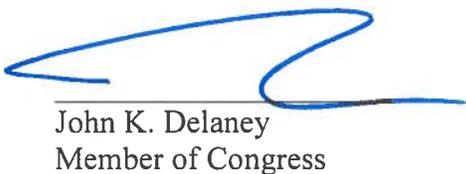

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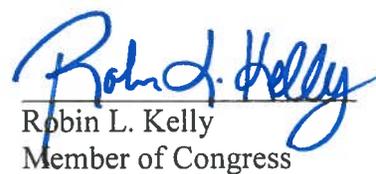

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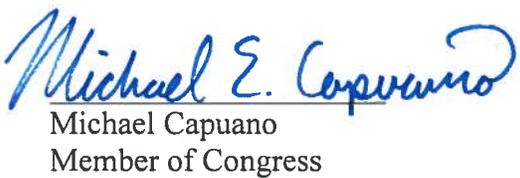
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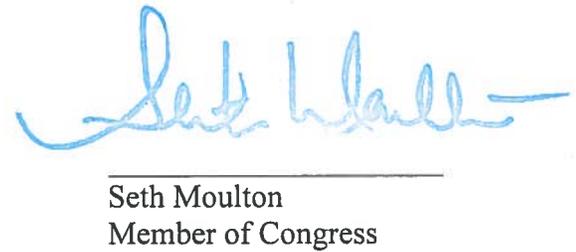
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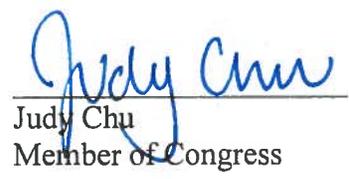
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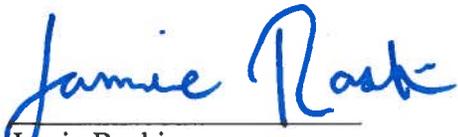
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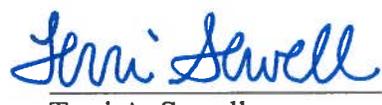
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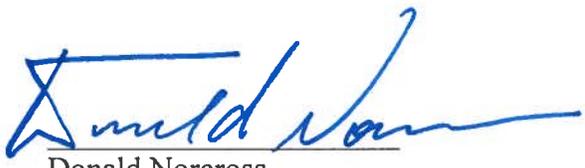
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