

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 17, 2013

Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman, Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable Rosa L. DeLauro
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on
Labor, HHS, Education, and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

RE: FY2014 Appropriations Request for HRSA Pediatric Loan Repayment Program

Dear Chairman Kingston and Ranking Member DeLauro:

We respectfully request that the Pediatric Subspecialty Loan Repayment program (Section 775 of the Public Health Service Act) be recognized as a critical national priority and strongly urge the Committee to provide it with \$5 million in funding in the FY2014 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations bill. This small investment (which represents one-tenth of the authorized funding level) will enable the Health Resources and Services Administration to start implementing this vital program that will have a lasting impact on children's health.

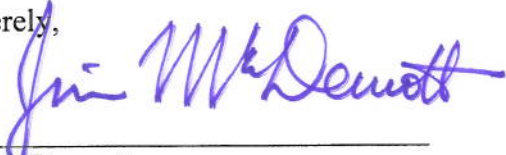
The number of pediatric medical subspecialists, pediatric surgical specialists, and pediatric mental health specialists today is inadequate to meet the growing health needs of America's children. According to a 2012 Children's Hospital Association survey, the average time to see a developmental pediatric specialist is 14.5 weeks; 8.9 weeks for neurology; and 7.5 weeks for child and adolescent psychiatry. Children's hospitals also reported extended vacancies of 12 months or longer for certain pediatric subspecialist positions, which contributes to the difficulty of accessing pediatric subspecialty care in a timely manner. Compounding the problem, fewer new doctors are choosing careers in pediatric subspecialties and pediatric mental health care, while the existing workforce continues to age. Financial concerns, such as debt load due to longer training requirements, are a significant factor and a deterrent influencing career choice.

Section 775 of the Public Health Service Act requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to establish and implement a pediatric specialty loan repayment program. Eligible participants must agree to work full time for not less than two years in a pediatric medical specialty, a pediatric surgical specialty, or in child and adolescent mental and behavioral health in a health professional shortage area or a medically underserved area as determined by the Secretary. In return, the program will pay up to \$35,000 in loan repayment for each year of service, for a maximum of three years. The law authorizes \$30 million per year for loan repayments for pediatric medical specialists and pediatric surgical specialists and \$20 million for

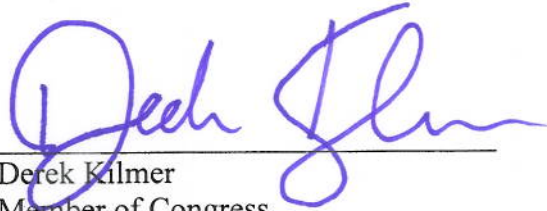
each year for loan repayments for child and adolescent mental and behavioral health professionals. The program was not funded in Fiscal Year 2013.

As you deliberate the Fiscal Year 2014 appropriations package, we strongly urge you to appropriate \$5 million within the Health Resources and Services Administration to provide initial funding for this program. Our nation desperately needs specialists specifically trained to treat the growing number of American children with serious physical and mental health conditions. It is vital that initial funding for this program be provided as soon as possible. Thank you for giving this request all appropriate consideration.

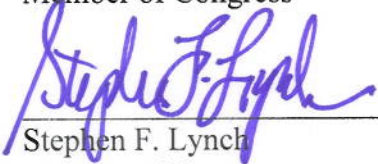
Sincerely,



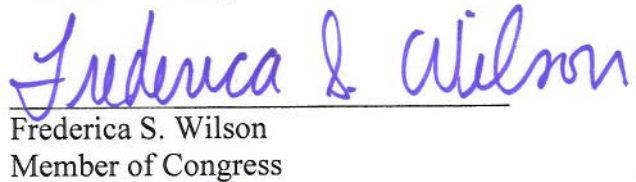
Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



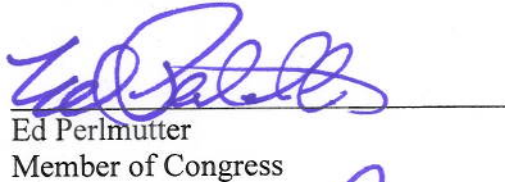
Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress



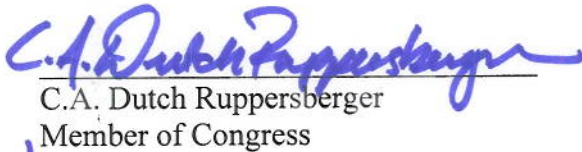
Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



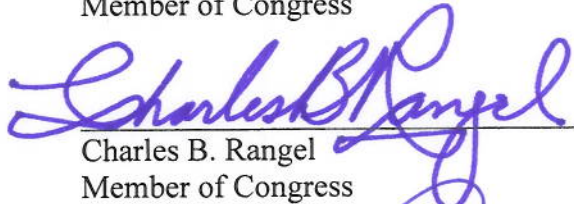
Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



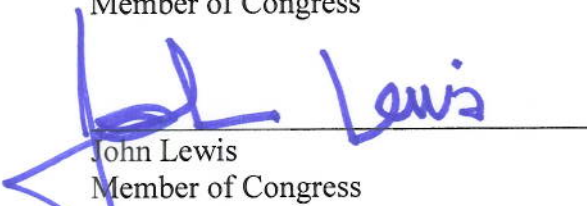
Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



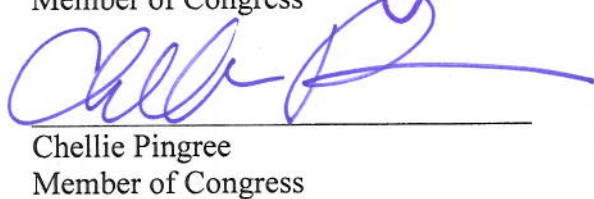
C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress



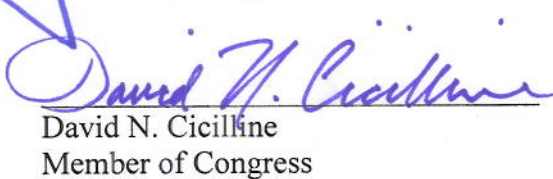
Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



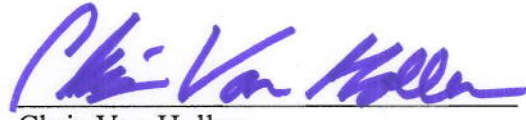
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



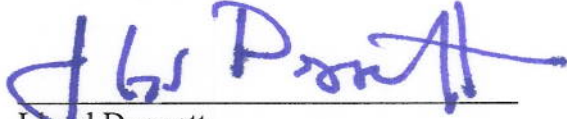
David Scott
Member of Congress



Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress



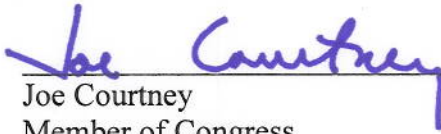
Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



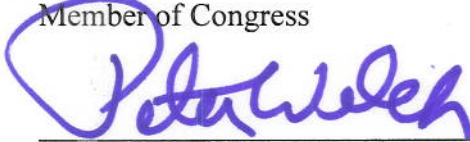
Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



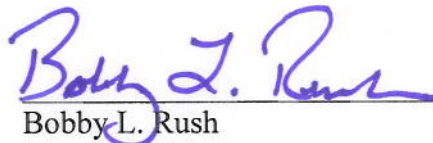
Steve Israel
Member of Congress



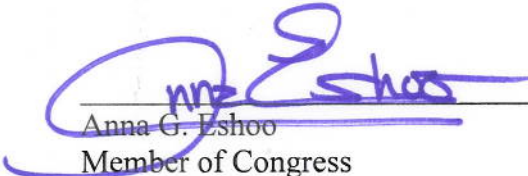
Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



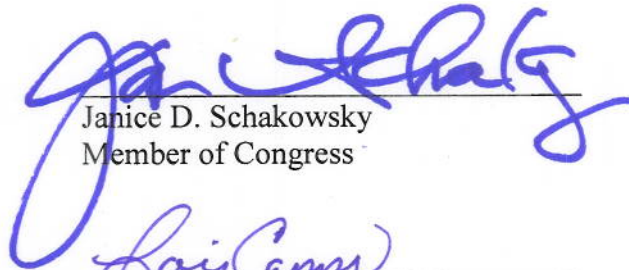
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



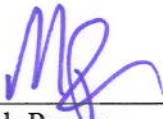
Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



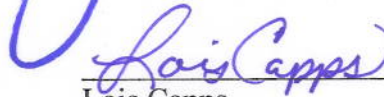
Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



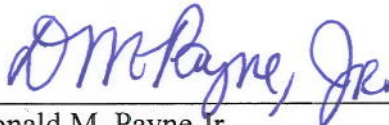
Janice D. Schakowsky
Member of Congress



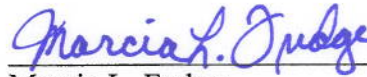
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



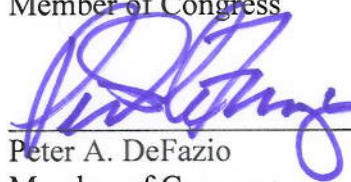
Donald M. Payne Jr.
Member of Congress



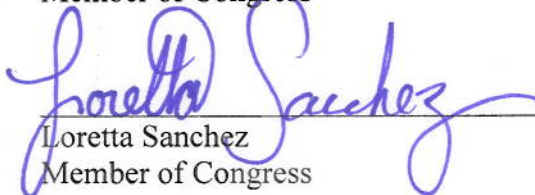
Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



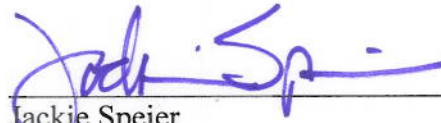
Henry A. Waxman
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Carol Shea-Porter

Carol Shea-Porter
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Kathy Castor

Kathy Castor
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