



HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20515

June 3, 2014

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

Dear Mr. President,

We are encouraged by the nation's continuing economic recovery, but we are concerned that recent gains have not been broadly shared. We write today to encourage you to direct the Executive Agencies to update regulations to ensure that America's prosperity is inclusive of women and minorities.

Specifically, we write to request that your Administration update three sets of workforce regulations: the minority hiring goals for federally-funded projects administered by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs at the Department of Labor (DOL); the apprenticeship regulations administered by the Education and Training Administration at DOL; and the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) Section 3 workforce regulations. We urge you to act to ensure the Notice of Proposed Rule-Making (NPRMs) for each set of regulations is advanced without further delay.

First, the hiring goals established in Executive Order 11246 (1965) were designed to ensure equitable and affirmative hiring of women and minorities for federal contractors and subcontractors on federally-funded projects. However, the workforce utilization goals used to meet these goals need to be updated. They have not been updated since 1980 and are based on 1970s statistics that no longer reflect today's workforce. Today, women comprise over half the workforce but make up only 2.6 percent of all construction workers. Meanwhile, black men comprise 9.7 percent of the employed male workforce but only 6.1 percent of the construction workforce. These examples illustrate the necessity to update and enforce goals to reflect current regional demographics.

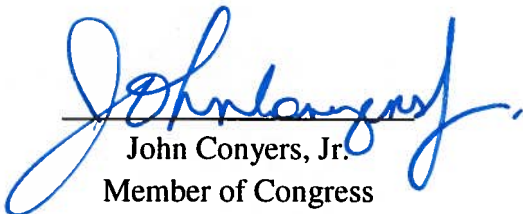
Second, the federal apprenticeship regulations must be revised. In 1978, DOL mandated affirmative action to increase women and minority enrollment in apprenticeship programs to

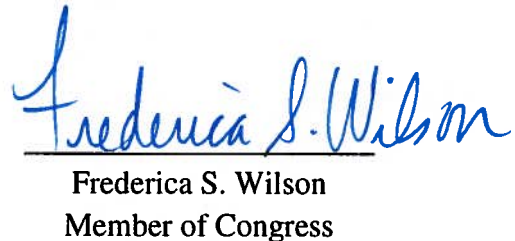
increase access to construction trades. Although the number of minority and women apprentices has increased in the last thirty years since the regulations were first implemented, other barriers have limited their utility. Apprenticeships offer a precise match between the skills employers need with the training workers receive. This is an essential pathway to gainful employment, particularly for demographic groups that currently face higher burdens of unemployment and underemployment.

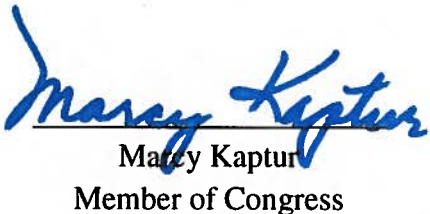
Finally, the language of the HUD Section 3 workforce regulations must be strengthened. The current rule allows contractors to creatively position new hires and maintain low-wages to comply with the letter of the law, while violating the spirit of the regulation. Through minor revisions, this regulation has the potential to meaningfully impact the communities most in need of employment and trade skills.

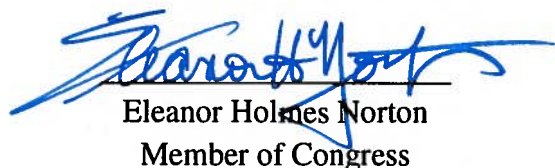
Ensuring that women and minorities have equal opportunities to fully participate in federally-funded projects and apprenticeship programs is essential to achieving a real economic recovery. We thank you for your attention to this request, and urge you to move your cabinet, the Domestic Policy Council, and others to ensure the NPRMs move forwards promptly.

Sincerely,


John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress

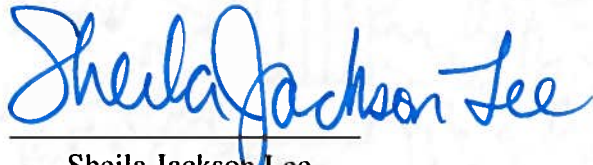

Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress


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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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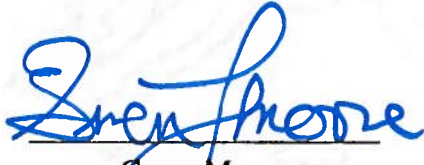

John Lewis
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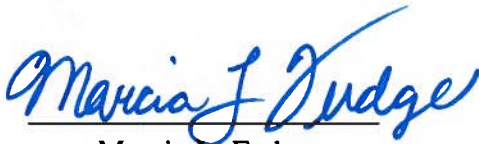
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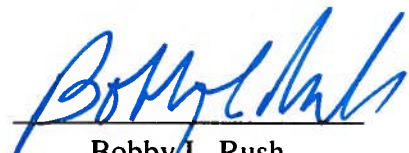
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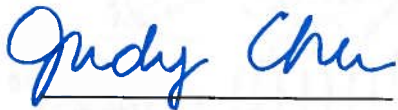
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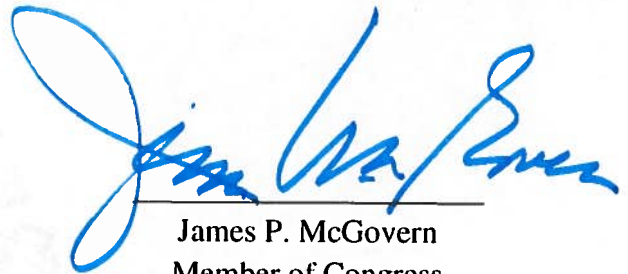
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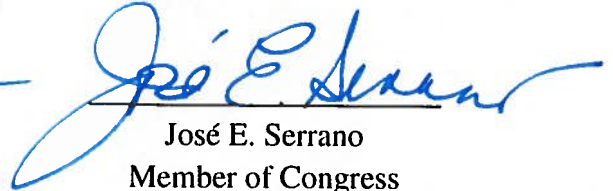
Judy Chu
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James P. McGovern
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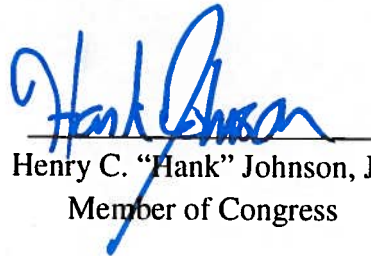
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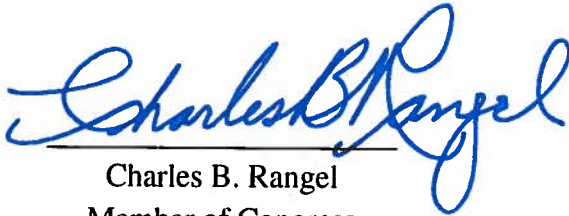
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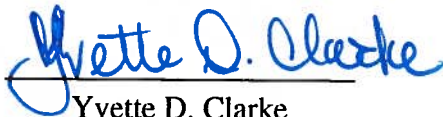
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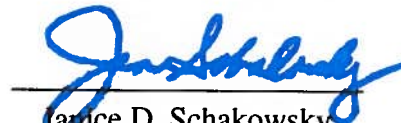
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