

DIANA DeGETTE
1ST DISTRICT, COLORADO

2368 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515
(202) 225-4431
FAX (202) 225-5657

DISTRICT OFFICE
600 GRANT STREET, SUITE 202
DENVER, CO 80203
(303) 844-4988
FAX (303) 844-4996

<http://dgette.house.gov>

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-0601

CHIEF DEPUTY WHIP
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND
COMMERCE
RANKING MEMBER
SUBCOMMITTEE ON OVERSIGHT AND
INVESTIGATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEE ON
ENVIRONMENT AND THE ECONOMY
SUBCOMMITTEE ON COMMUNICATIONS
AND TECHNOLOGY

May 24, 2016

The Honorable Paul D. Ryan
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Speaker Ryan,

On February 2, 2016, the House Pro-Choice Caucus sent you a letter urging you to disband the Select Investigative Panel (the Panel). Democratic members of the Panel and numerous leaders in both the House and Senate joined the Pro-Choice Caucus in this call. Today, because of continued abuses which jeopardize the integrity of the House and the safety of Americans, the undersigned House Democrats write once again to respectfully ask you to put a stop to this behavior and disband the Panel.

While the Panel's investigation has never been fair or fact-based, its pattern of reckless disregard for safety has escalated over the past few weeks. From the beginning, Chair Marsha Blackburn has used her unilateral subpoena power to intimidate scientific researchers, doctors, clinics, health care providers, universities, and other entities. On May 11, 2016, the majority reached a new low when it posted a press release identifying a doctor and his clinic by name. The press release's hyperbolic rhetoric and misleading allegations pose a real danger to the doctor, the staff at the clinic, and the patients of the named clinic. These recent steps are completely outside the bounds of acceptable Congressional behavior. We disgrace ourselves by allowing this misconduct to continue.

The most recent subpoenas are only the latest in a series of aggressive tactics that constitute a virtually unprecedented abuse of Congressional power, perhaps only matched by the McCarthy hearings of the 1950s. To this day, the Panel still lacks credible evidence to support its case that any federal laws were broken. Yet the Chair and majority staff continue to harass individuals, researchers, clinics, and health care facilities, issuing a total of 36 subpoenas so far, often without reaching out to the subject of the subpoena to ask for voluntary compliance first or without giving subjects sufficient time to comply. Congress simply has no business "prosecuting" these unfounded allegations.

The danger posed by the Panel is real and serious. There is a long and undeniable history of violence against women's health care clinics, physicians, and patients. As recently as November 27, 2015, a gunman murdered three people and injured nine others at a Planned Parenthood clinic in Colorado Springs, repeating the "baby parts" rhetoric pushed by the very members of Congress leading this investigation. Despite this horrific event, the same inflammatory language has been used repeatedly during Panel hearings, in communications with the press, and in other documents. The majority has also refused to take necessary steps to protect the names and privacy of those subject to the investigation. Indeed, some names and targets have already been publicly disclosed. We are deeply disappointed by the majority's decision to continue down this road despite these well-known risks.

As Speaker of the House, you have a unique role and special responsibilities in our government. We -- as well as counsel for witnesses called before the Panel -- have tried numerous times to express our concerns and see to it that they are addressed. These pleas have been met with silence. The onus is on you to put an end to this witch hunt. You cannot continue to turn a blind eye to the serious risks presented by the Panel and still claim to fulfill your responsibilities as Speaker. We implore you not to stand idly by while tax dollars are spent on a baseless investigation that endangers women, scientists, health providers, and others involved in women's health care and biomedical research. We respectfully ask that you respond to this letter in writing no later than June 6, 2016.

Sincerely,



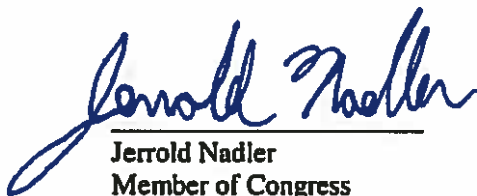
Diana DeGette
Member of Congress



Louise Slaughter
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress



Jackie Speier
Member of Congress



Suzan R. DelBene
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



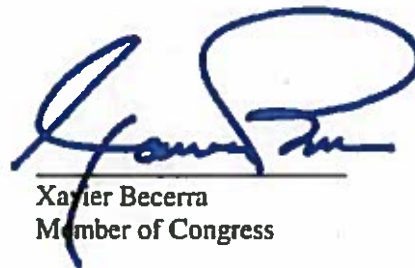
Brad Ashford
Member of Congress



Karen Bass
Member of Congress



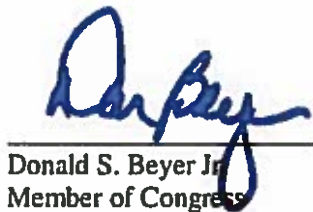
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Xavier Becerra
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress



Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



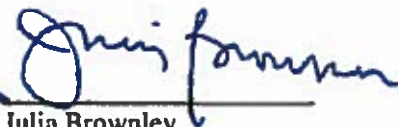
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



Corrine Brown
Member of Congress



Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



Cheri Bustos
Member of Congress



G. K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Lois Capps
Member of Congress



Michael Capuano
Member of Congress


Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress


André Carson
Member of Congress


Matt Cartwright
Member of Congress


Kathy Castor
Member of Congress

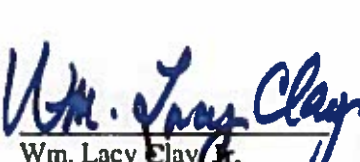

Joaquín Castro
Member of Congress


Judy Chu
Member of Congress

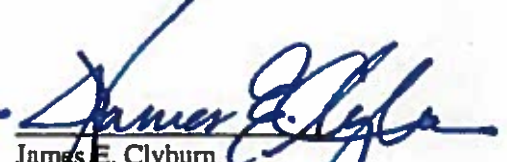

David Cicilline
Member of Congress



Katherine Clark
Member of Congress


Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress



Emanuel Cleaver
Member of Congress


James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress


Steve Cohen
Member of Congress


Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress


John Conyers, Jr.
Member of Congress


Joe Courtney
Member of Congress


Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress


Elijah Cummings
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Susan Davis
Member of Congress



Peter A. DeFazio
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



Rosa DeLauro
Member of Congress



Mark DeSaulnier
Member of Congress



Theodore E. Deutch
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress



Lloyd Doggett
Member of Congress



Mike Doyle
Member of Congress



Donna F. Edwards
Member of Congress



Keith Ellison
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Anna G. Eshoo
Member of Congress



Elizabeth H. Esty
Member of Congress



Sam Farr
Member of Congress



Chaka Fattah
Member of Congress



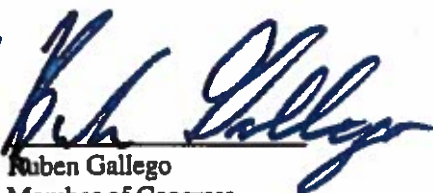
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



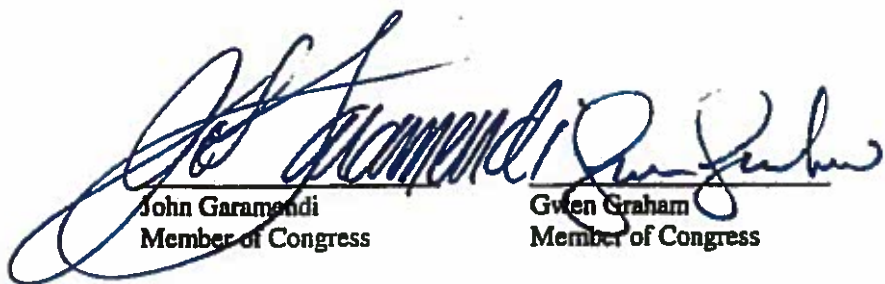
Lois Frankel
Member of Congress



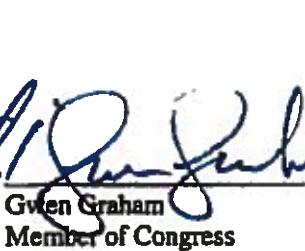
Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Ruben Gallego
Member of Congress



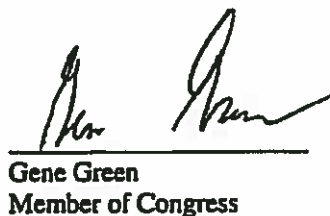
John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Gwen Graham
Member of Congress



Alan Grayson
Member of Congress



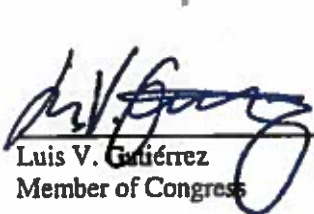
Gene Green
Member of Congress



Al Green
Member of Congress



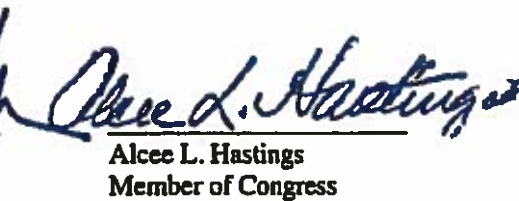
Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Luis V. Gutiérrez
Member of Congress



Janice Hahn
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Denny Heck
Member of Congress



Brian Higgins
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Rubén Hinojosa
Member of Congress



Michael M. Honda
Member of Congress



Steny H. Hoyer
Member of Congress



Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



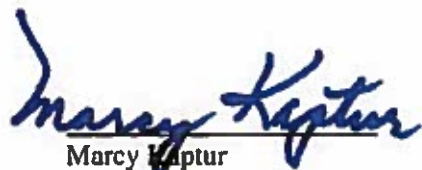
Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson
Member of Congress



Marcy Kaptur
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Joseph P. Kennedy III
Member of Congress



Daniel T. Kildee
Member of Congress



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Ann Kirkpatrick
Member of Congress



Ann McLane Kuster
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



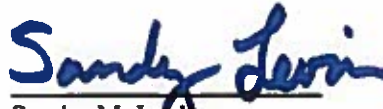
John B. Larson
Member of Congress



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Sander M. Levin
Member of Congress



John Lewis
Member of Congress



Ted Lieu
Member of Congress



David Loebsack
Member of Congress



Zoe Lofgren
Member of Congress



Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress



Nita Lowey
Member of Congress



Ben Ray Lujan
Member of Congress



Michelle Lujan Grisham
Member of Congress



Carolyn B. Maloney
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Jim McDermott
Member of Congress



James P. McGovern
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
Member of Congress



Gregory Meeks
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress

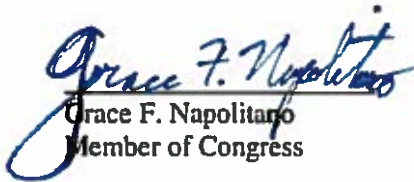


Gwen Moore
Member of Congress

Seth Moulton
Member of Congress



Patrick E. Murphy
Member of Congress



Grace F. Napolitano
Member of Congress



Richard M. Nolan
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell
Member of Congress



Donald M. Payne, Jr.
Member of Congress



Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Stacey Plaskett
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress





David E. Price
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress


Charles B. Rangel
Member of Congress


Kathleen M. Rice
Member of Congress


Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress


Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress


Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger
Member of Congress


Bobby Rush
Member of Congress



Tim Ryan
Member of Congress


Linda Sánchez
Member of Congress


Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress



John Sarbanes
Member of Congress


Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress


Kurt Schrader
Member of Congress


David Scott
Member of Congress

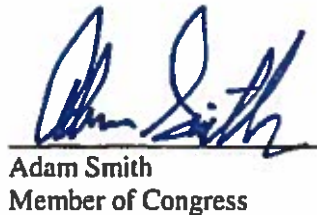

Bobby Scott
Member of Congress

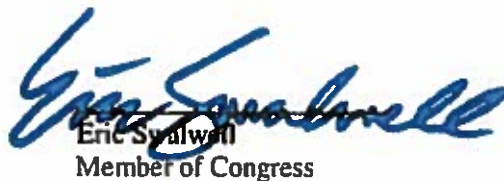

José E. Serrano
Member of Congress



Terry Sewell
Member of Congress



Brad Sherman
Member of Congress


Albio Sires
Member of Congress


Adam Smith
Member of Congress


Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress


Mark Takai
Member of Congress


Mark Takano
Member of Congress


Mike Thompson
Member of Congress


Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress

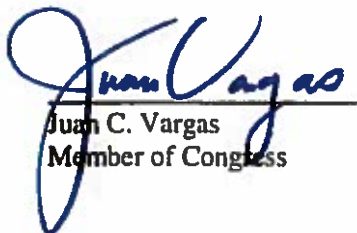

Dina Titus
Member of Congress

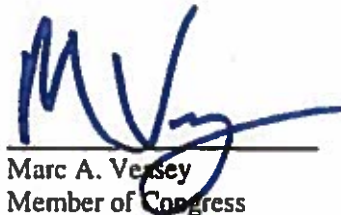

Paul Tonko
Member of Congress


Norma Torres
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress


Chris Van Hollen
Member of Congress


Juan C. Vargas
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress


Filemon Vela
Member of Congress


Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress


Pete Visclosky
Member of Congress


Timothy Walz
Member of Congress


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress


Maxine Waters
Member of Congress


Peter Welch
Member of Congress


Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress

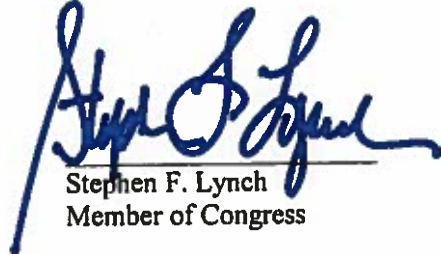

John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Betty McCollum
Member of Congress


Beto O'Rourke
Member of Congress


Kyrsten Sinema
Member of Congress


John C. Carney, Jr.
Member of Congress


Stephen F. Lynch
Member of Congress


James R. Langevin
Member of Congress


Tammy Duckworth
Member of Congress