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February 8, 2017

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Trump:

We write regarding your recent call for an investigation into alleged voter fraud in the 2016 Presidential election. As an initial matter, claims of widespread voter fraud in the 2016 Presidential election are largely unsubstantiated. Inquiries conducted thus far have not revealed any evidence of widespread voter fraud, nor is there is evidence substantiating your claim that “3 to 5 million illegal votes” were responsible for Hillary Clinton’s popular vote win. Nevertheless, we are writing to demand that any investigation your Administration conducts into voter irregularities in the 2016 Presidential election include a thorough investigation and analysis of voter suppression and disenfranchisement.

Our nation’s history on voting rights is checkered, and the systemic disenfranchisement of low-income and minority voters is longstanding and well documented. In fact, it was not until 600 people marched through Selma, Alabama in 1965 that Congress passed the Voting Rights Act. It is now 52 years later and the battle is far from over.

In 2013, the Supreme Court effectively dismantled the Voting Rights Act when it struck down a section of the law that required jurisdictions with histories of voter discrimination to receive “preclearance” before changing their voting laws. The result is 14 new state laws implementing voting restrictions that went into effect for the first time in 2016. These new laws include roadblocks such as strict photo ID requirements, early voting cutbacks, and registration restrictions. Three states with new voter restrictions—Florida, North Carolina, and Alabama—have demonstrated histories of voter disenfranchisement and were monitored by the Department of Justice for illegal electioneering. The breadth of the disenfranchisement caused by statewide voting restrictions is personified in Wisconsin, North Carolina, and Florida.

- Wisconsin’s strict voter ID law has been the subject of extensive litigation. Although a federal court held that the law unconstitutionally burdened low-income individuals and minorities, the Supreme Court allowed it to go into effect for the 2016 election. According to Wisconsin’s records, as many as 300,000 people lacked the proper ID and

may have been prevented from voting. Statewide, turnout for the 2016 Presidential election was the lowest it has been in two decades.

- North Carolina’s law included strict voter ID requirements, eliminated same-day voter registration, cut a full week of early voting, and barred voters from casting a ballot outside their home precincts. A federal court struck most of the law after finding it suppressed African-American voters “with almost surgical precision.” Despite this ruling, early voting hours and locations were curtailed during the 2016 Presidential election. African-American turnout for the early vote dropped nearly nine percent.
- Florida law bars anyone with a felony conviction from voting unless they travel to the state capitol and request clemency—a burdensome requirement for those that cannot afford to travel to the state capitol. Approximately 1.5 million Florida residents are unable to vote because of the law, and approximately 25 percent of Florida’s African-American residents could not cast a ballot in the 2016 Presidential election.

In addition to passing harsh laws, states like Alabama are closing driver’s license offices in rural areas with large African-American populations, while states like Georgia, North Carolina, and Florida are moving polling places out of largely minority districts. Incidents of voter intimidation have also occurred, like the one in Sparta, Georgia, when more than 180 African-American citizens were confronted by law enforcement officers that were dispatched by the local election board. These citizens, all American voters, were told they had to appear in person in order to prove they were a resident and could vote in upcoming elections.

This is unacceptable. Every American deserves a voice in our elections and the freedom to cast their vote without interference. These restrictive laws and intimidation tactics make clear that it is time to put teeth back into the Voting Rights Act and counter voter disenfranchisement. We hope to work together with you to remedy widespread voter disenfranchisement across our country.

Sincerely,



Derek Kilmer
Member of Congress



Terri Sewell
Member of Congress



Elijah E. Cummings
Member of Congress



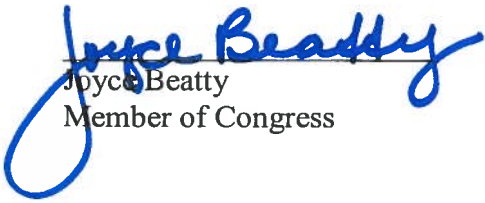
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D
Member of Congress



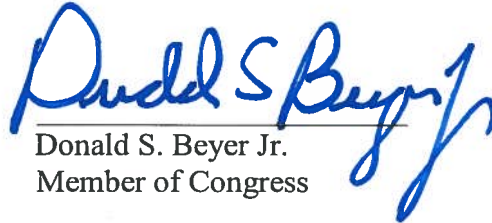
Pete Aguilar
Member of Congress



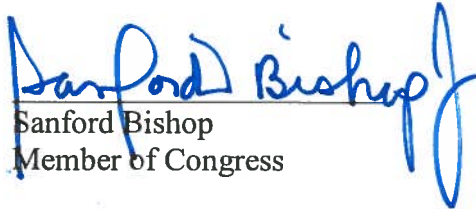
Karen Bass
Member of Congress



Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Sanford Bishop
Member of Congress



Lisa Blunt Rochester
Member of Congress



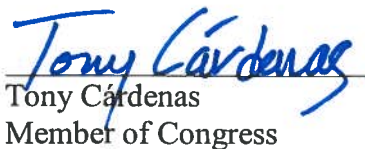
Brendan F. Boyle
Member of Congress



Robert A. Brady
Member of Congress



G.K. Butterfield
Member of Congress



Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress



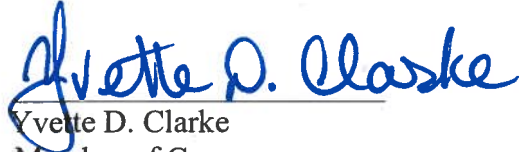
André Carson
Member of Congress



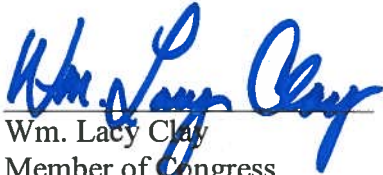
David N. Cicilline
Member of Congress



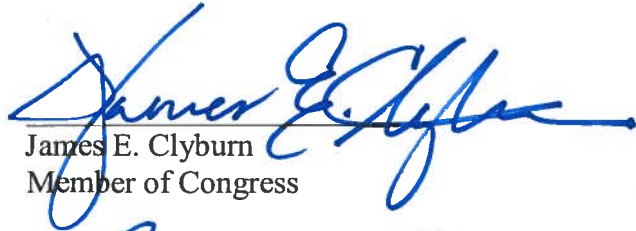
Katherine Clark
Member of Congress



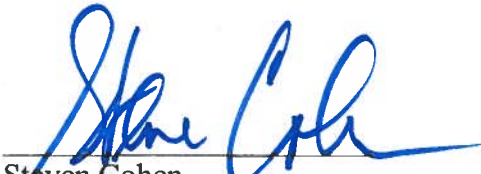
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



Wm. Lacy Clay
Member of Congress




James E. Clyburn
Member of Congress



Steven Cohen
Member of Congress



Charlie Crist
Member of Congress



Joseph Crowley
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



Susan Davis
Member of Congress



John K. Delaney
Member of Congress



Suzan DelBene
Member of Congress



Val Demings
Member of Congress



Eliot L. Engel
Member of Congress



Dwight Evans
Member of Congress



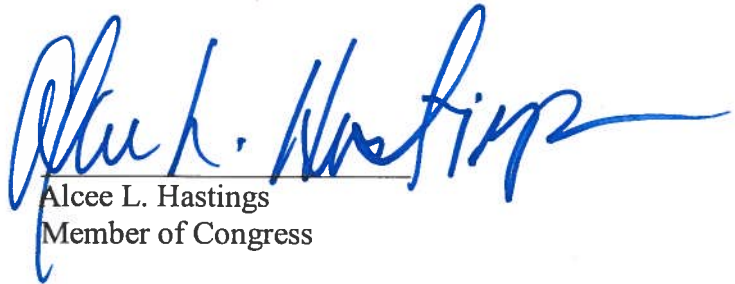
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



Marcia L. Fudge
Member of Congress



Colleen Hanabusa
Member of Congress



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



Jim Himes
Member of Congress



Sheila Jackson Lee
Member of Congress



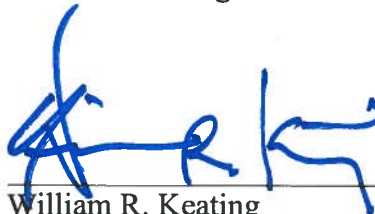
Hakeem Jeffries
Member of Congress



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



Eddie Bernice Johnson
Member of Congress



William R. Keating
Member of Congress



Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Ron Kind
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Brenda L. Lawrence
Member of Congress



Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



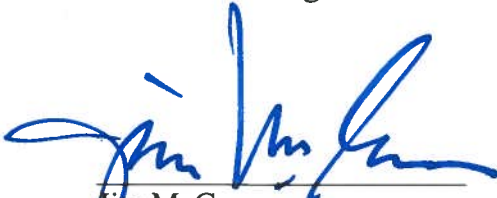
John Lewis
Member of Congress



Sean Patrick Maloney
Member of Congress



Donald McEachin
Member of Congress



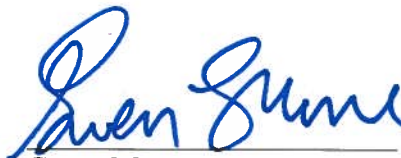
Jim McGovern
Member of Congress



Gregory W. Meeks
Member of Congress



Grace Meng
Member of Congress



Gwen Moore
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.
Member of Congress



Donald Payne Jr.
Member of Congress



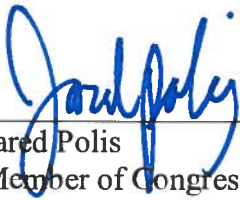
Ed Perlmutter
Member of Congress



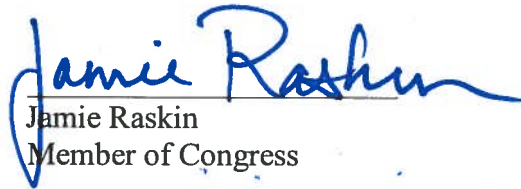
Scott H. Peters
Member of Congress



Stacey E. Plaskett
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



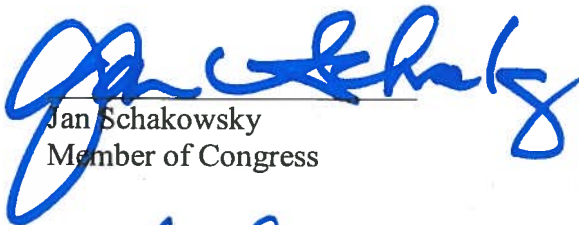
Jamie Raskin
Member of Congress



Cedric L. Richmond
Member of Congress



Lucille Roybal-Allard
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Robert C. "Bobby" Scott
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Darren M. Soto
Member of Congress



Eric Swalwell
Member of Congress



Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress




Dina Titus
Member of Congress



Norma J. Torres
Member of Congress



Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



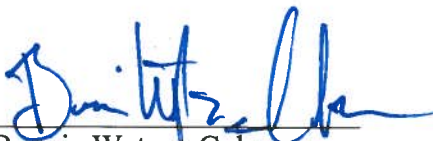
Marc Veasey
Member of Congress



Filemon Vela Jr.
Member of Congress



Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress



Bonnie Watson Coleman
Member of Congress



Frederica S. Wilson
Member of Congress



John Yarmuth
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress