

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 28, 2017

The Honorable Thomas E. Price, M.D.
Secretary
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Price:

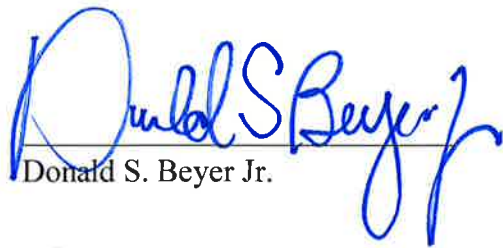
We are writing to request that you modify the planned maintenance on HealthCare.gov to avoid unnecessary disruption of the open enrollment period for the health insurance marketplaces. We have great concern over the recent announcement that the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) plans to shut down HealthCare.gov every Sunday but one for a twelve-hour time window during the six-week open enrollment period. We therefore ask HHS to limit these outages and tailor them to ensure that outages are not scheduled during times with historically higher traffic or, conversely, add additional days onto open enrollment to make up for the extensive amount of lost enrollment time.

The recent announcement by HHS regarding planned shut downs of HealthCare.gov during the 2018 Open Enrollment Period is incredibly concerning. These shut down periods will amount to a full three days in which Americans will not be able to enroll and access health coverage. Furthermore, this does not take into account that HHS has already reduced the time that Americans will be able to enroll this year by 47 days (a 51 percent time reduction) as compared to the 2017 Open Enrollment Period. By contrast, the HealthCare.gov website was online 99.9 percent of the time during the 2015 and 2016 open enrollment periods.

This is just one of a series of troubling decisions made by HHS to limit Americans' access to health insurance under the Affordable Care Act. The Trump Administration is spending 90 percent less on advertising to enroll people in the health insurance marketplaces despite clear evidence that advertising is an essential catalyst for enrollment. Also, 41 percent less funding will be allocated to navigators, the individuals who help people sign up for coverage. Most recently, HHS decided to no longer send regional representatives to assist in state-based open enrollment events, a clear move by the Trump Administration to purposefully weaken marketplace enrollment efforts. Therefore, we are extremely troubled by the decision to further limit the opportunity for those who wish to sign up for health coverage.

On behalf of the millions of Americans who will have more difficulty or will not be able to sign up for and access health insurance coverage because of the many decisions made by HHS and President Trump, we ask that you take the simple step of tailoring website maintenance to shorter durations during times with low traffic or compensating for the lost hours due to maintenance by adding time to the end of the open enrollment period. For an agency whose stated mission is “to enhance and protect the health and well-being of all Americans,” we ask that you fulfill your mission and adjust the maintenance window to ensure that Americans are able to access care. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely,



Donald S. Beyer Jr.



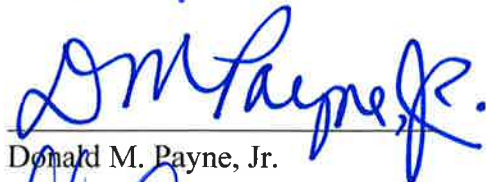
Jackie Speier



Raja Krishnamoorthi



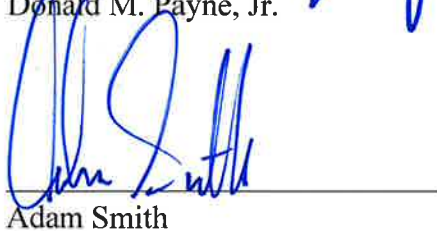
Theodore Deutch



Donald M. Payne, Jr.



John Garamendi



Adam Smith



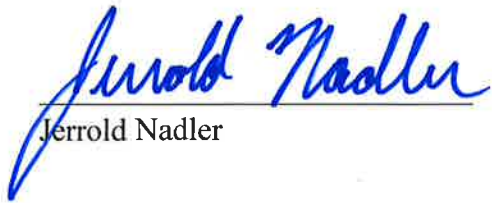
Mike Quigley



Ted W. Lieu



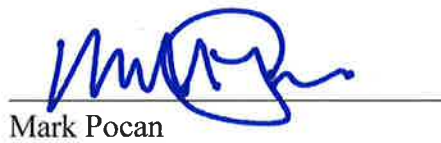
Grace F. Napolitano


Jerrold Nadler


Juan Vargas


Daniel T. Kildee


Lucille Roybal-Allard


Mark Pocan


Gerald E. Connolly


Adam B. Schiff

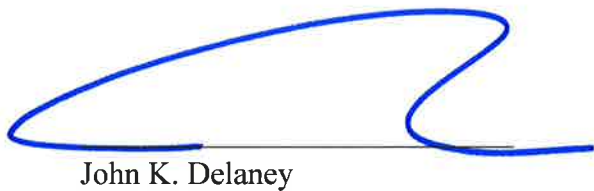

Peter J. Visclosky


Steve Cohen


James E. Clyburn

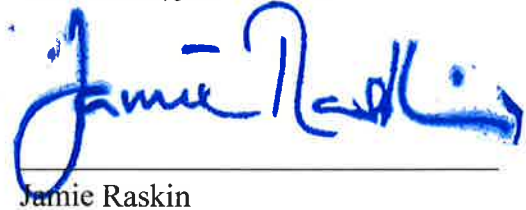

Rick Larsen


Tim Ryan


John K. Delaney


Michelle Lujan Grisham


Al Green


Jamie Raskin



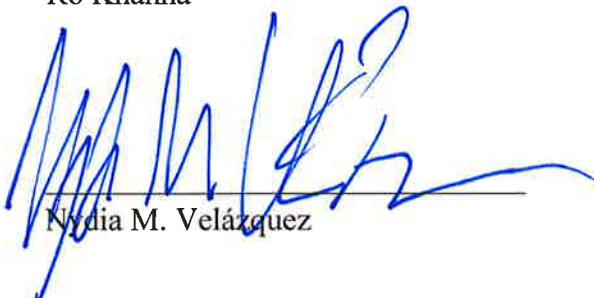
Joseph Crowley



Ro Khanna



Mark Takano



Nydia M. Velázquez



Eleanor Holmes Norton



Bill Foster



Sean Patrick Maloney



Gregory W. Meeks



Betty McCollum



Ruben J. Kihuen



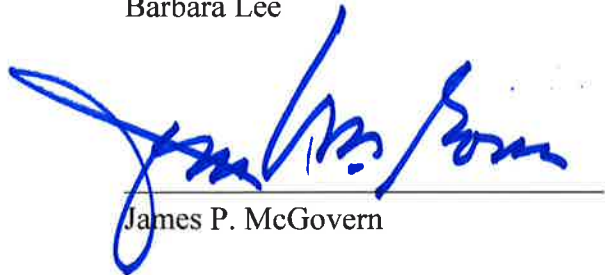
Daniel W. Lipinski



Barbara Lee



Suzanne Bonamici



James P. McGovern



Lloyd Doggett



Lisa Blunt Rochester



Kathleen M. Rice



Darren Soto



Dina Titus



Debbie Wasserman Schultz



Zoe Lofgren



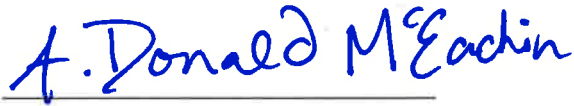
Niki Tsongas



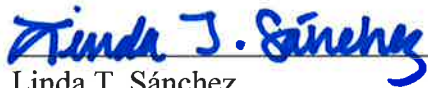
Norma J. Torres



Charlie Crist



A. Donald McEachin



Linda T. Sánchez



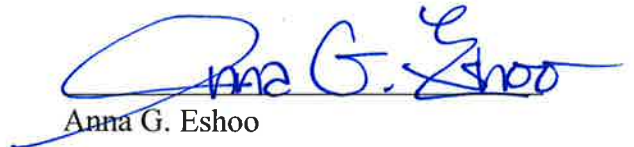
Marcia L. Fudge



Brenda L. Lawrence



Lois Frankel



Anna G. Eshoo



Chellie Pingree



Val Demings

Alan Lowenthal

Alan Lowenthal

Nanette Diaz Barragan

Nanette Diaz Barragan

Ami Bera

Ami Bera

John A. Yarmuth

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Jimmy Panetta

Jimmy Panetta

José E. Serrano

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Jared Huffman

Jared Huffman

Yvette D. Clarke

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Eddie Bernice Johnson

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Joyce Beatty

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J. Luis Correa

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