

**Congress of the United States**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

June 12, 2017

The Honorable David J. Shulkin, M.D.  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs  
810 Vermont Ave, NW  
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shulkin:

As Members of Congress who share your commitment to our nation's veterans, we write to express our extreme concern with your proposal to cut critical unemployment benefits for disabled veterans as part of your Fiscal Year 2018 Budget Submission.

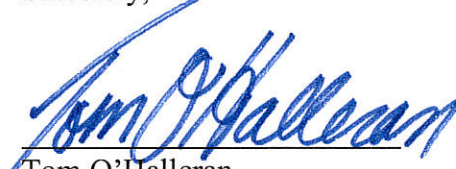
Your budget request proposes to eliminate Individual Unemployability (IU) benefits to retirement-aged veterans. As you know, nearly 225,000 senior veterans across the country who depend on the IU program as an economic lifeline would be impacted by these short-sighted cuts.

Assuming these veterans can compensate for the loss of income from IU with other retirement sources is simply incorrect. As noted by AMVETS, "these veterans have largely been disabled, out of the work force and not paying into Social Security for many years before reaching 65. Many have been severely disabled as a result of their military service and unable to work since the day of their discharge." With little to no access to resources like 401(k)'s, IU payments provide needed support for these veterans and their families.

Gutting critical benefits for our veterans who have been unable to find work as a result of their service-related disabilities breaks our fundamental promise to the brave men and women who served our country in uniform. Our district offices, in addition to local VSO's, report receiving calls from worried veterans who would be devastated by these proposed cuts.

Ending the IU program for our neediest veterans would mark a stark departure from long-standing bipartisan commitments to end veteran homelessness and poverty, and would leave thousands struggling to make ends meet. More than ever, we must continue to build on progress in our states to permanently end veteran homelessness, not undermine these critical efforts. To that end, we strongly oppose the proposed changes to IU and will work to ensure that these dangerous cuts are not implemented.

Sincerely,

  
Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress

  
Ruben Gallego  
Member of Congress




Dina Titus  
Member of Congress



Nydia M. Velázquez  
Member of Congress



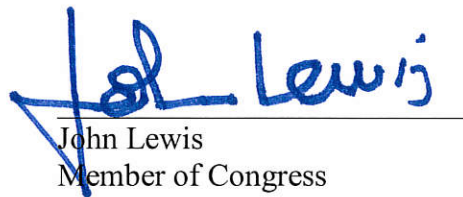
Eleanor Holmes Norton  
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Jacky Rosen  
Member of Congress



Thomas R. Suozzi  
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John Lewis  
Member of Congress



Frank Pallone, Jr.  
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Beto O'Rourke  
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Sean Patrick Maloney  
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Donald M. Payne, Jr.  
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Mark Takano  
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.  
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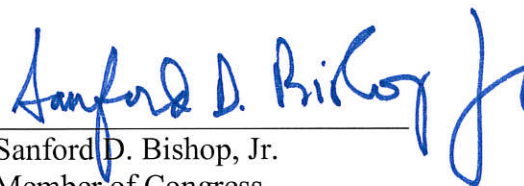
Peter A. DeFazio  
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Salud O. Carbajal  
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Jim Costa  
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.  
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Carol Shea-Porter  
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán  
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Walter B. Jones  
Member of Congress



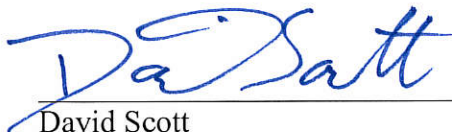
Ruben Kihuen  
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Josh Gottheimer  
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Joyce Beatty  
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David Scott  
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Anthony G. Brown  
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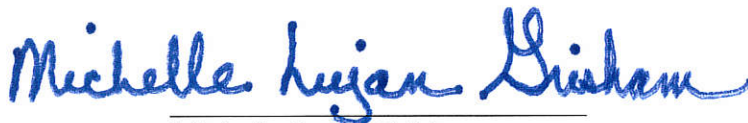
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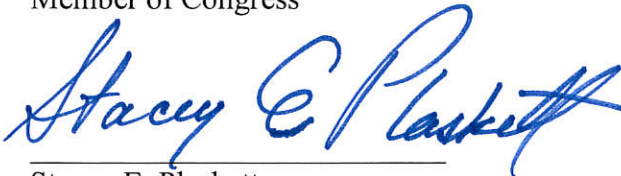
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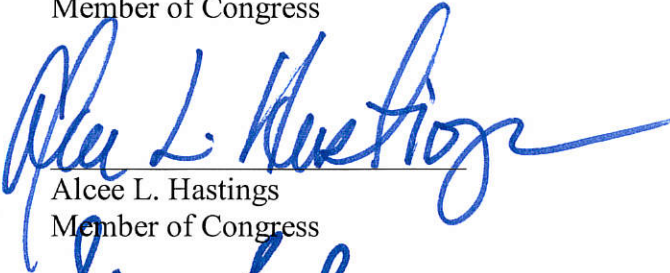
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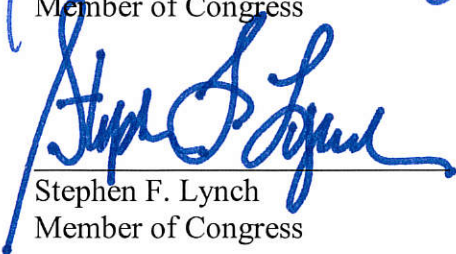
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Chellie Pingree  
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Colleen Hanabusa  
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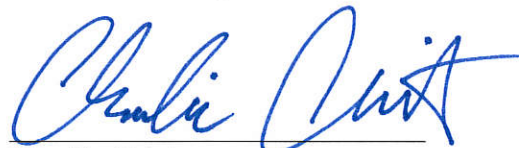
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Tulsi Gabbard  
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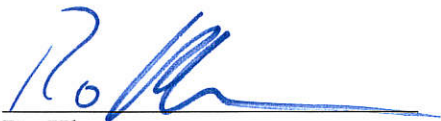
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Jamie Raskin  
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Lucille Roybal-Allard  
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Ro Khanna  
Member of Congress



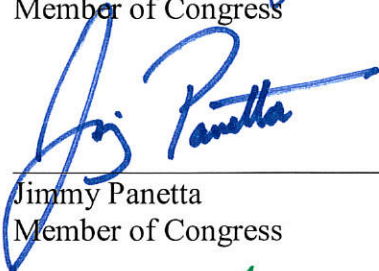
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Norma J. Torres  
Member of Congress



Donald Norcross  
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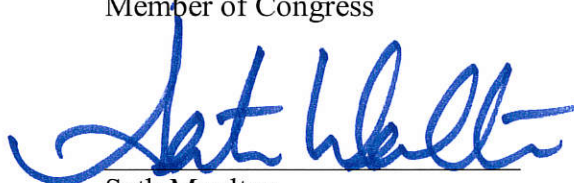
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Tony Cardenas  
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Gene Green  
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Seth Moulton  
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John Garamendi  
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Joe Courtney  
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Filemon Vela  
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