

# Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

July 25, 2017

The Honorable Thomas E. Price  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, SW  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Price:

We write today to request an explanation as to the recent decision within your agency to shorten the project period of the Office of Adolescent Health's (OAH) Teen Pregnancy Prevention Program (TPPP) from five years to three years. This decision, made before Congress has finalized fiscal year (FY) 2018 funding, would be a blow to bipartisan efforts to prevent unplanned teen pregnancies. We are deeply concerned by this decision and are requesting a timely and comprehensive explanation.

Since Congress established TPPP in 2010, this unique and innovative program has served more than a million young people, trained more than 7,000 professionals, and supported partnerships among more than 3,000 community-based organizations across the country. Grounded in evidence and committed to quality implementation, evaluation and innovation, TPPP has supported a local approach to the healthy development of young people and has proven to support young people adopt sexual health behaviors that help them avoid unintended pregnancy.

Additionally, Congress provided full funding of \$101 million for TPPP and an additional \$6.8 million in evaluation transfer authority just three months ago in the final FY 2017 funding bill. Therefore, it is puzzling why this Administration has chosen to disrupt the progress of the existing five-year cooperative agreement projects. We are gravely concerned that more than 80 grantees have been notified that their TPPP-funded work will end on June 30, 2018 instead of June 30, 2020 as originally designed, awarded, and implemented.

Further, the five Capacity Building Assistance grantees were notified that their funding would end effectively immediately as of June 30, 2017. This means that the 33 state-wide TPPP projects currently in operation will have to cut short their local investments and efforts serving the most marginalized young people without the support previously provided by the Capacity Building Assistance teams.

The negative impacts of this unnecessary decision cannot be overstated. At a time when young people are most in need of information and education to protect their sexual and reproductive health, this Administration is denying evidence and science. Young people deserve better.

The shortening of the TPPP project period in the middle of the ongoing work will have a ripple effect across communities. In addition to hurting the young people currently participating in TPPP-supported programs and the 600,000 young people who would have been served through the remaining years of the projects, this decision will mean fewer jobs, fewer trained professionals, and reduced partnerships in communities all across the country.

With these devastating impacts in mind, we request an explanation of the decision and an explanation addressing the following questions within 45 days:

1. By whom and when was the decision made to shorten the TPPP cooperative agreements by two years?
2. Why was the notification to end grants made in advance of Congress determining final FY 2018 appropriations?
3. How did the decision consider and justify the burden and adverse impact for young people being served, the professionals and partnerships, and their communities?
4. How did the decision consider and justify the additional capacity, staff, and resource burden of administering new grant competitions?
5. What is the Department's intent if Congress appropriates TPPP funding for FY 2018? Namely, will current TPPP grantees be allowed to continue their projects and if not, what does HHS plan to do with FY 2018 funding?

In the absence of consistent, quality, foundational K-12 school-based sex education across the country, the programs supported by OAH's TPPP are critical in supporting vulnerable young people. It is our collective responsibility to ensure the health of our nation's most marginalized youth. Sadly, this recent action runs counter to our shared responsibility.

We look forward to your timely response.

Sincerely,

  
Barbara Lee  
Member of Congress

  
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Member of Congress


  
Michelle Lujan Grisham  
Member of Congress


  
Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

  
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Marc Veasey  
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Suzanne Bonamici  
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Member of Congress

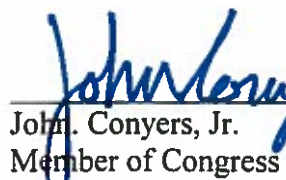
  
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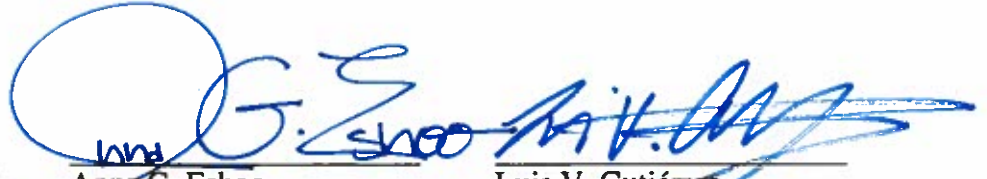
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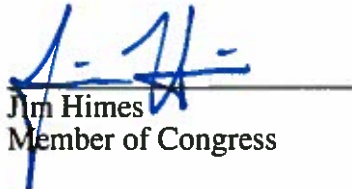
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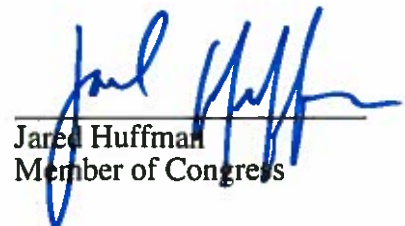
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Doris Matsui  
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Dave Loebsack  
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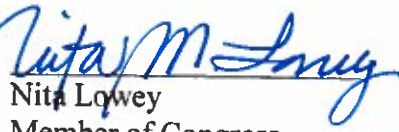
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Betty McCollum  
Member of Congress

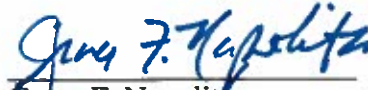
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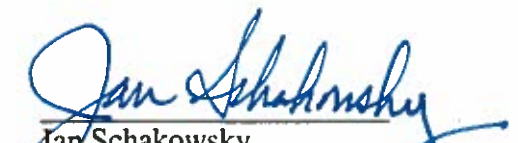
  
Jamie Raskin  
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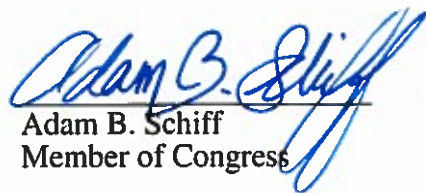
  
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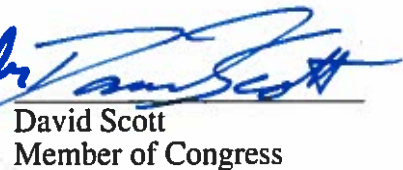
  
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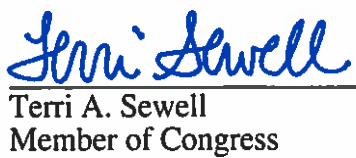
  
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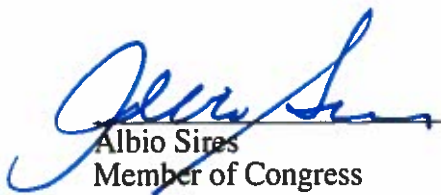
  
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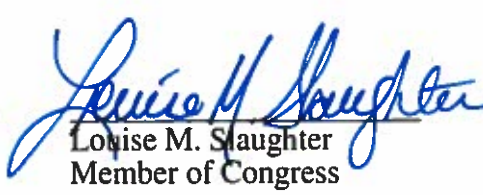
  
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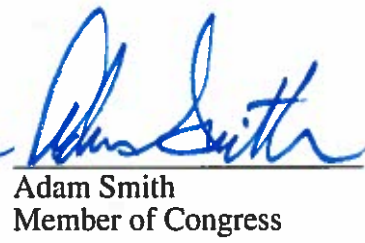
  
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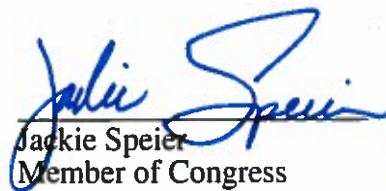
  
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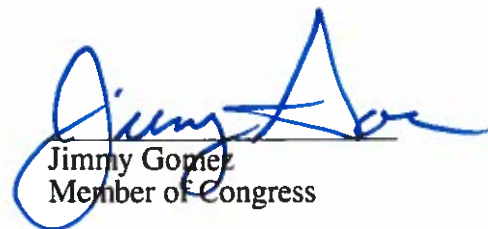
  
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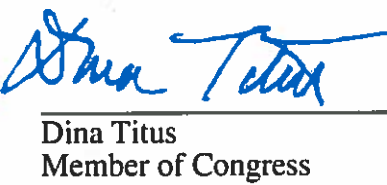
  
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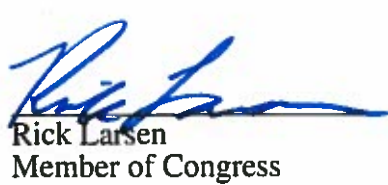
  
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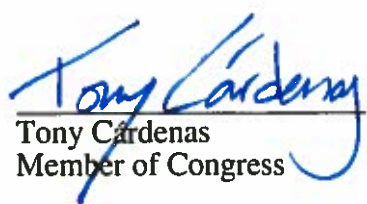
  
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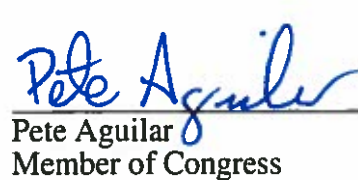
  
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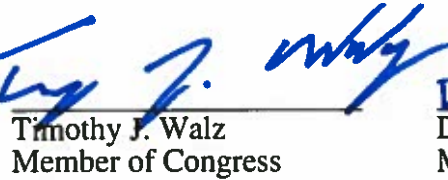
  
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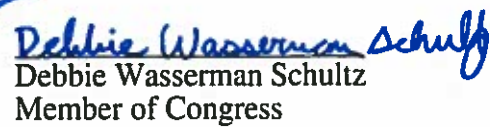
  
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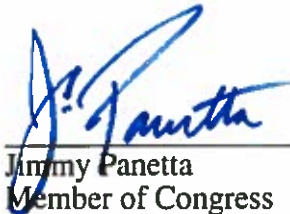
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Jimmy Panetta  
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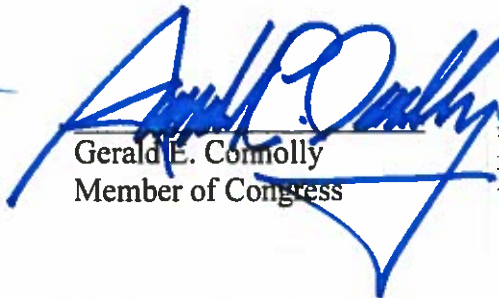
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Paul Tonko  
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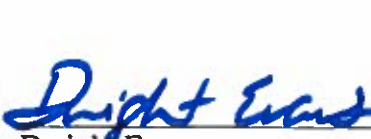
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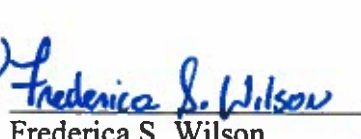
  
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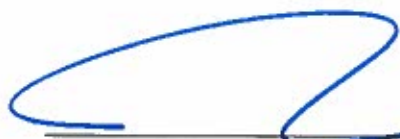
  
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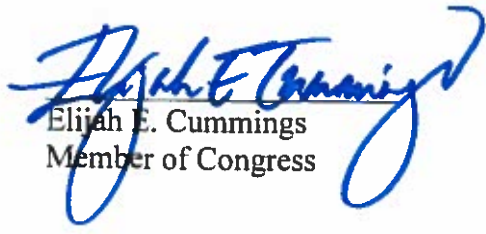
  
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