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CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

COMMITTEE ON ARMED SERVICES  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
VICE CHAIR, STRATEGIC FORCES  
READINESS  
COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, SPACE,  
AND TECHNOLOGY  
SUBCOMMITTEES:  
CHAIR, SPACE AND AERONAUTICS  
ENERGY

March 13, 2020

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro  
Chair  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human  
Services, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Tom Cole  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Appropriations  
Subcommittee on Labor, Health & Human  
Services, and Related Agencies  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairwoman DeLauro and Ranking Member Cole:

As you begin work on the Fiscal Year 2021 Labor, Health & Human Services, and Related Agencies (LHHS) Appropriations Bill, we urge you to include report language for increased multi-institute eating disorders research under the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses that affect 30 million Americans during their lifetimes,<sup>1</sup> and have the second highest mortality rate out of any psychiatric illness, only second to opioid use.<sup>2</sup> Eating disorders are complex, bio-psycho-social illnesses, that affect people of every age, race, gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status, and when left untreated, can lead to a number of medical conditions such as Type II Diabetes, Heart Failure, Osteoporosis, and Kidney Failure.

Despite the severity of eating disorders, the NIH has historically underfunded eating disorders research it only spent ~0.11% of its budget on this research area between 2015-2018, and the National Institute for Mental Health (NIMH) only spent ~1.27% of its budget on eating disorders research over the same time period, for a disease that affects 9% of the U.S. population and has the highest treatment cost out of any mental health condition.<sup>3,4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Judson, J.I., Hiripi, E., Pope, H.G., & Kessler, R.C. (2007). The Prevalence and correlates of eating disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Biological Psychiatry*, 61(3), 348-358.

<sup>2</sup> Arcelus, J., Mitchell, A.J., Wales, J., & Nielsen, S. (2011). Mortality rates in patients with anorexia nervosa and other eating disorders. A meta-analysis of 36 studies. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 68(7), 724-731.

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.hhs.gov/about/budget/fy2018/budget-in-brief/nih/index.html>; [https://report.nih.gov/categorical\\_spending.aspx](https://report.nih.gov/categorical_spending.aspx)

<sup>4</sup> Owens PL (AHRQ), Fingar KR (IBM Watson Health), McDermott KW (IBM Watson Health), Muhuri PK (AHRQ), Heslin KC (AHRQ). Inpatient Stays Involving Mental and Substance Use Disorders, 2016. HCUP Statistical Brief #249. March 2019. Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, Rockville, MD. [www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb249-Mental-Substance-Use-Disorder-Hospital-Stays-2016.pdf](http://www.hcup-us.ahrq.gov/reports/statbriefs/sb249-Mental-Substance-Use-Disorder-Hospital-Stays-2016.pdf)

While underfunded, multiple institutes within NIH have invested in eating disorders research given the complex, co-morbid conditions, from 2015-2018 an average of 44% of eating disorders research was carried out through institutes other than the NIMH. In turn, there are numerous unaddressed areas of research and opportunities to advance our understanding, prevention, identification, and treatment of the disorder, and we urge you to join us in encouraging the NIH to invest in multi-institute eating disorders research. The report language is as follows:

*“Eating Disorders.* — The Committee commends the NIH for supporting multi-institute research on the chronic, fatal, and serious mental illness of eating disorders that affect 30 million Americans during their lifetimes, and its association with other conditions such as diabetes, infertility, heart disease, PTSD, substance use, co-morbid mental illnesses, and tooth decay. The Committee recognizes that eating disorders are a deadly bio-psycho-social illness and that multiple research topics must be explored to understand, prevent, and treat eating disorders, including psychosocial issues; health disparities and food insecurity; environmental factors such as weight stigma; the complex interplay of metabolic processes; and maternal health. The Committee strongly urges the NIH to increase funding for eating disorders research and explore these and other research questions through multiple Institutes and Centers including NIMH, NIDDK, NIMHD, and NIDA. The Committee directs the NIH to inform the Committee on the steps taken to increase research funding for eating disorders and measures taken to improve prevention, diagnosis, and treatment.”

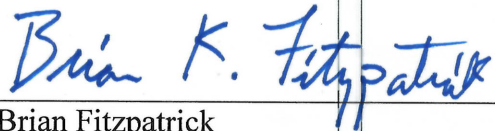
We urge you to support inclusion of this language within the FY 2021 LHHS Appropriations package.

Sincerely,



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Kendra S. Horn  
Member of Congress



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Brian Fitzpatrick  
Member of Congress



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Scott Peters  
Member of Congress



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Mark DeSaulnier  
Member of Congress



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Ted Deutch  
Member of Congress

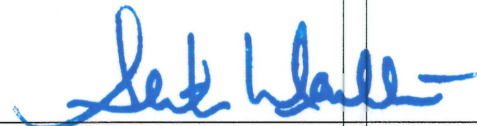


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Sheila Jackson Lee  
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal  
Member of Congress



Seth Moulton  
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Peter Welch  
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Guy Reschenthaler  
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Anna G. Eshoo  
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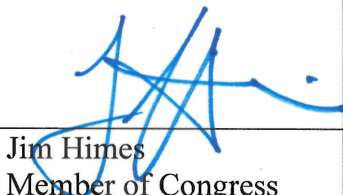
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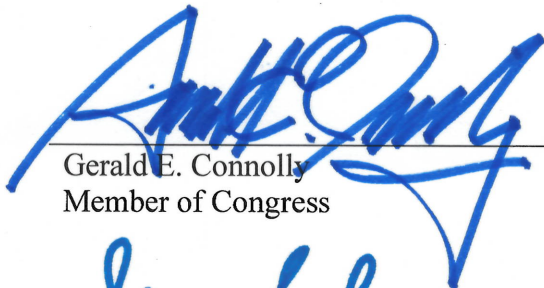
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Member of Congress



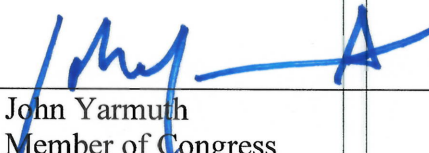
Lisa Blunt Rochester  
Member of Congress



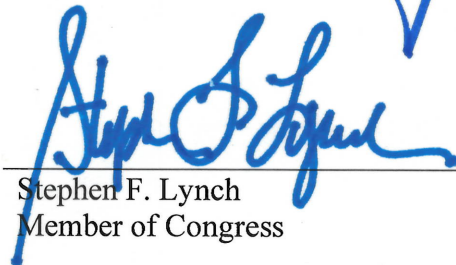
Jim Himes  
Member of Congress



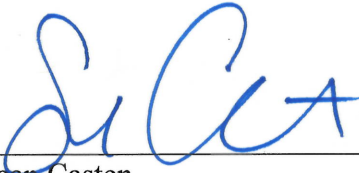
Gerald E. Connolly  
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Sean Casten  
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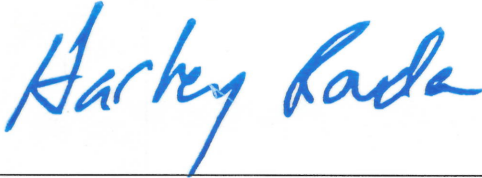
Ben McAdams  
Member of Congress



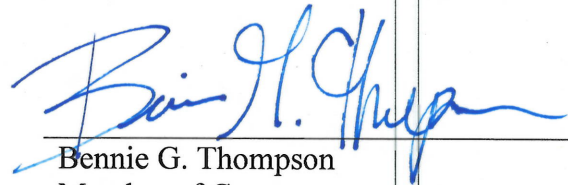
Danny K. Davis  
Member of Congress



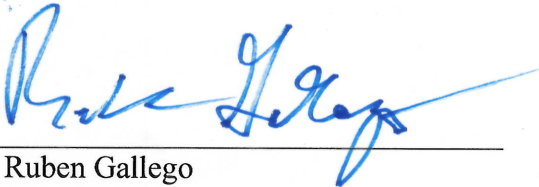
Sharice L. Davids  
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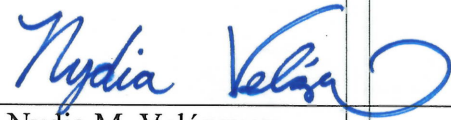
Harley Rouda  
Member of Congress



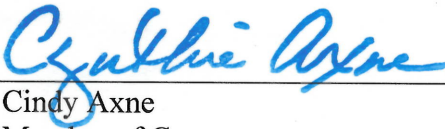
Bennie G. Thompson  
Member of Congress



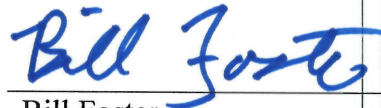
Ruben Gallego  
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Nydia M. Velázquez  
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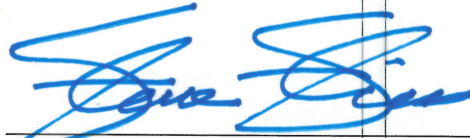
Cindy Axne  
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Steve Stivers  
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Mike Levin  
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Paul D. Tonko  
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Ted W. Lieu  
Member of Congress

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Julia Brownley  
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Earl Blumenauer  
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Tony Cardenas  
Member of Congress



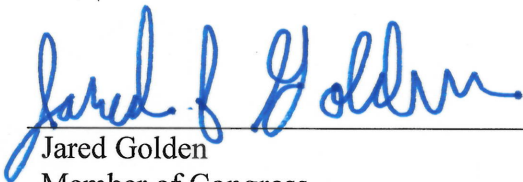
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Bradley S. Schneider  
Member of Congress



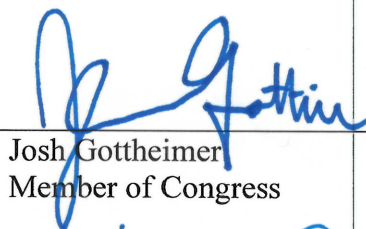
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Jefferson Van Drew  
Member of Congress



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Jared Golden  
Member of Congress



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Josh Gottheimer  
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Susan W. Brooks  
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Kathleen M. Rice  
Member of Congress



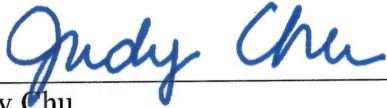
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Abigail Spanberger  
Member of Congress



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Peter DeFazio  
Member of Congress



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Judy Chu  
Member of Congress