

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

September 27, 2024

The Honorable Jack Reed
Chairman
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Roger Wicker
Ranking Member
Senate Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Mike Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Adam Smith
Ranking Member
House Committee on Armed Services
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Chairman Reed, Ranking Member Wicker, Chairman Rogers, and Ranking Member Smith,

As the House and Senate prepare to negotiate the final Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), we write to strongly urge the removal of provisions that actively target LGBTQ+ service members and LGBTQ+ dependents and threaten the recruitment, retention, and readiness of our Armed Forces. They include:

- **Provisions restricting medically necessary care for transgender servicemembers or their family members:** H.R. 8070 (as engrossed in the House) §§ 713 and 579C¹; S. 4638 (as reported to the Senate) §§ 708 and 709.
- **A provision removing the discretion of military chain of command and senior civilian leadership to approve the display of certain flags, thus banning the pride flag:** H.R. 8070 (as engrossed in the House) § 1049D.
- **A provision enacting a transgender book ban:** H.R. 8070 (as engrossed in the House) § 579B.
- **A provision establishing a statutory ban on Drag shows:** H.R. 8070 (as engrossed in the House) § 1754.

These sections of the NDAA were constructed to score political points rather than support and invest in our most important operational advantage: our service members. The U.S. government should not prohibit our service members from accessing medically necessary care, especially care that is safe, effective, and supported by every major medical association in the U.S., representing more than 1.3 million doctors. The care transgender service members receive is essential for them to be their authentic selves and focus on their mission. Denying this access to health care would deter transgender people from joining the Armed Forces, damage retention efforts, and hurt our military readiness. As our nation faces recruitment and retention challenges,

¹ This provision also prohibits service members from being reassigned to a different duty station via the Exceptional Family Member Program for the purpose of providing their dependents with gender-affirming care.

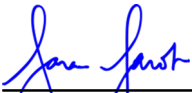
attacking transgender people—who are more likely to serve in the U.S. military than cisgender people—is a grave mistake.

In addition, denying this care to the transgender dependents and spouses of service members will also undermine our recruitment and retention efforts, as people will not join or remain in the Armed Forces if their family members are unable to receive the care they and their doctors agree is necessary.

The federal government should be working to ensure all service members and their families can thrive. This includes working to ensure that LGBTQ+ service members and family members feel welcome in the military and that symbols and art forms related to the LGBTQ+ community are not singled out for censorship.

If service members are concerned for their health care, their right to exist, or the well-being of their children and loved ones, they cannot focus on their jobs, thereby weakening military readiness and retention rates. Ensuring our ranks reflect the diversity of the American people is essential to the morale and cohesion of our Armed Forces and to our national security. We strongly urge you to remove these harmful sections from the NDAA during conference negotiations.

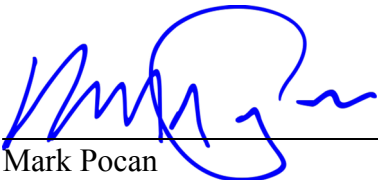
Sincerely,



Sara Jacobs
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



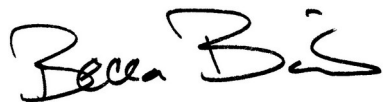
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



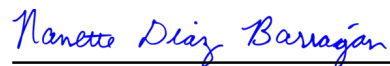
Colin Z. Allred
Member of Congress



Gabe Amo
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



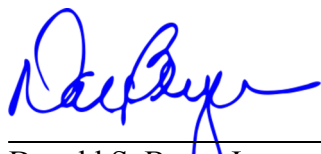
Nanette Diaz Barragan
Member of Congress



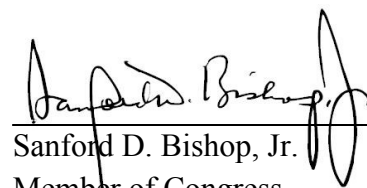
Joyce Beatty
Member of Congress



Ami Bera, M.D.
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Sanford D. Bishop, Jr.
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Lisa Blunt Rochester
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Suzanne Bonamici
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Jamaal Bowman, Ed.D.
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Brendan F. Boyle
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Julia Brownley
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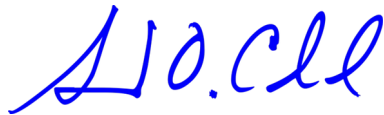
Shontel M. Brown
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Cori Bush
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Yadira Caraveo M.D.
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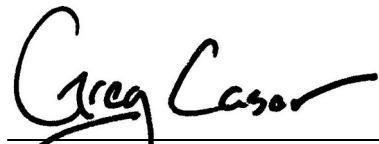
Salud Carbajal
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Tony Cárdenas
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Troy Carter
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Greg Casar
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Ed Case
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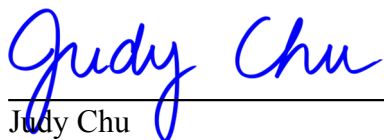
Sean Casten
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Kathy Castor
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Joaquin Castro
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Judy Chu
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Emanuel Cleaver, II
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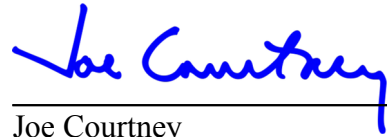
Steve Cohen
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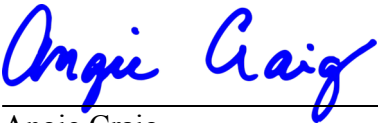
Gerald E. Connolly
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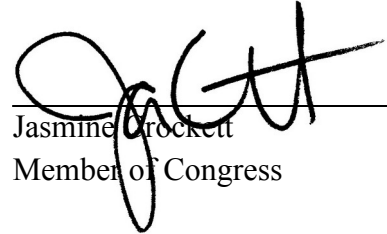
Jim Costa
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Joe Courtney
Member of Congress



Angie Craig
Member of Congress



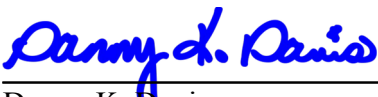
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Sharice L. Davids
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Danny K. Davis
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Madeleine Dean
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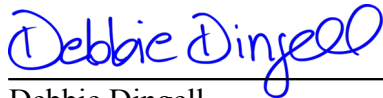
Rosa L. DeLauro
Member of Congress



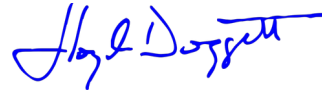
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Anna G. Eshoo
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Maxwell Alejandro Frost
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Ruben Gallego
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John Garamendi
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Jesús G. "Chuy" García
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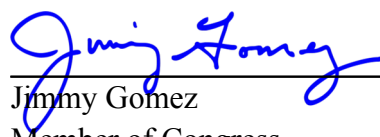
Robert Garcia
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Sylvia R. Garcia
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Dan Goldman
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Jimmy Gomez
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Josh Gottheimer
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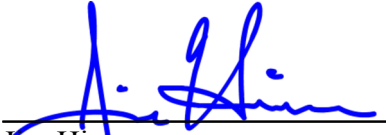
Al Green
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Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



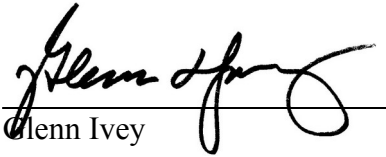
Jahana Hayes
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Jim Himes
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Chrissy Houlahan
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Glenn Ivey
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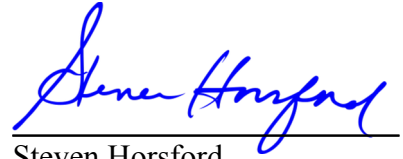
Sydney Kamlager-Dove
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Robin L. Kelly
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Ro Khanna
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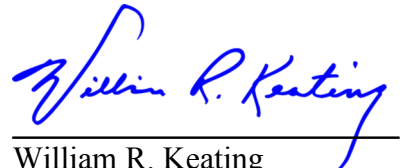
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress



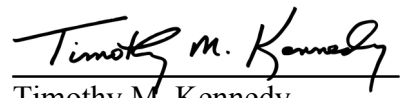
Jared Huffman
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Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



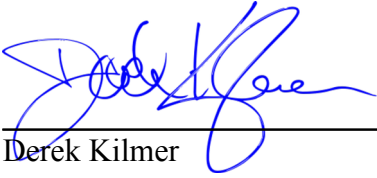
William R. Keating
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Timothy M. Kennedy
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Daniel T. Kildee
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Derek Kilmer
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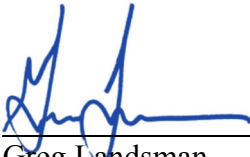
Andy Kim
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Raja Krishnamoorthi
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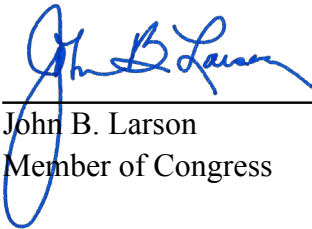
Ann McLane Kuster
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Greg Landsman
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Rick Larsen
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John B. Larson
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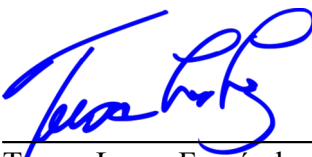
Barbara Lee
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Summer L. Lee
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Susie Lee
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Teresa Leger Fernández
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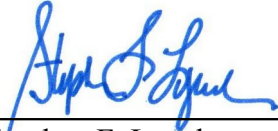
Mike Levin
Member of Congress



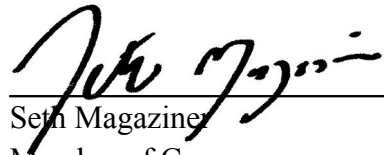
Ted W. Lieu
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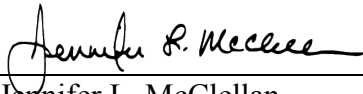
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Morgan McGarvey
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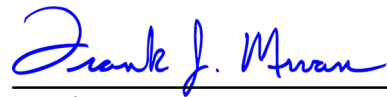
Gwen S. Moore
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Joseph D. Morelle
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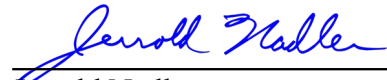
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Jerrold Nadler
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Ayanna Pressley
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Delia C. Ramirez
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Jamie Raskin
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Deborah K. Ross
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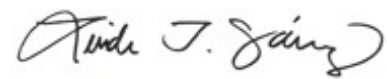
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



Patrick Ryan
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Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



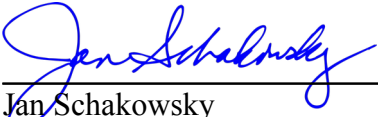
Linda T. Sánchez
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John P. Sarbanes
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Mary Gay Scanlon
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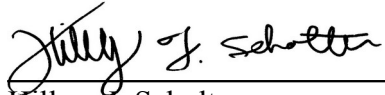
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Eric Sorensen
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Darren Soto
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Abigail Davis Spanberger
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Melanie Stansbury
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Greg Stanton
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Haley M. Stevens
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Marilyn Strickland
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Emilia Strong Sykes
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Shri Thanedar
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Mike Thompson
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Rashida Tlaib
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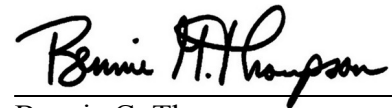
Paul D. Tonko
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Dina Titus
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JM Tokuda
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Norma J. Torres
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Ritchie Torres
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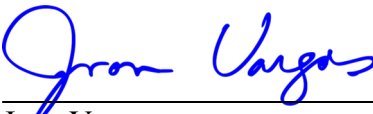
Lori Trahan
Member of Congress



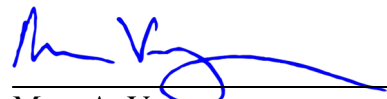
David J. Trone
Member of Congress



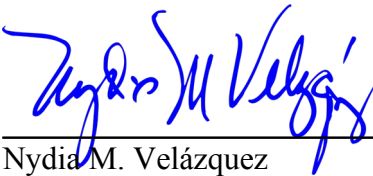
Lauren Underwood
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Juan Vargas
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Marc A. Veasey
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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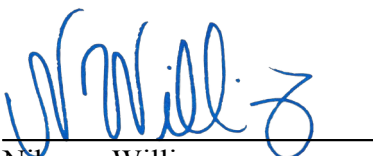
Debbie Wasserman Schultz
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Maxine Waters
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Bonnie Watson Coleman
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Nikema Williams
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