

SAM FARR  
20TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

1126 LONGWORTH HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0520  
(202) 225-2861

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Congress of the United States  
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100 WEST ALISAL  
SALINAS, CA 93901  
(831) 424-2229

701 OCEAN STREET  
ROOM 318  
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060  
(831) 429-1976

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November 14, 2013

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

Dear Secretary Sebelius:

Thank you for your tireless efforts to bring high-quality, affordable health care to Americans across the country.

We share the goal of expanding health care coverage and enabling families to stay safe and healthy. Through the Affordable Care Act (ACA), millions of Americans who have never had health insurance will be able to choose from a variety of plans with strong consumer protections and competitive prices.

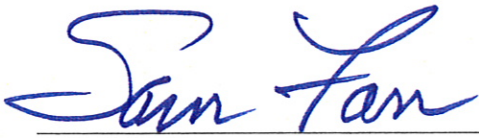
As you know, adapting to new federal laws like ACA which directly impact the lives of a large number of Americans requires flexibility on the part of the government and industry. Our state of California is the state with the largest concentration of agriculture workers in the country. Due to a combination of certain provisions of the Affordable Care Act and the uncertain immigration status of the current workforce, we are concerned about the ability of these workers to obtain quality affordable coverage. These agriculture employers that offer health care plans to their employees through an HHS waiver are currently seeking a one year extension so they can continue to provide coverage while planning for full ACA implementation in the future. We strongly urge you to renew that waiver. We also remain open to finding other options provided they enable agricultural employers and their workers to retain needed health coverage.

Several agricultural associations operate benefit trusts that provide health plans for their members to offer. The production of agricultural products, particularly in the specialty crop industry, is labor intensive and at times physically taxing. It is in employers and the workers' interests to have employment practices that promote a strong and healthy workforce. The plans offered provide coverage that has been specifically designed to meet the needs of the particular workforce—access to primary and preventative care. The plans offered provide this and yet are affordable for employers in a low margin industry subject to significant foreign competition. The catastrophic insurance provided under these plans, while subject to an annual limit, has traditionally covered all but one percent of catastrophic conditions in any year. After December 31, 2013 these plans will lose their waiver under the ACA and have indicated that they will have

to make difficult decisions about their ability to make changes to their plans or continue to offer coverage. We believe that it would be more reasonable and cost effective to allow employers to continue valuable coverage to their employees as they work to come into full compliance with the ACA.

I understand that you have been working with agricultural industry leaders and workers to craft a solution to this problem. These employers have been offering their employees health care coverage for years before the enactment of the ACA to attract the labor force necessary to stay in business, and they want to continue offering these benefits in cooperation with HHS. By granting an extension over the next year if no other immediate alternative can be found HHS and industry leaders and stakeholders can continue their efforts to reach an agreement about the most appropriate path forward. We hope that we can work together to allow these trusts to continue to offer quality affordable coverage to their employees while crafting a long term solution to address these issues.

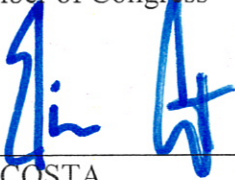
Sincerely,



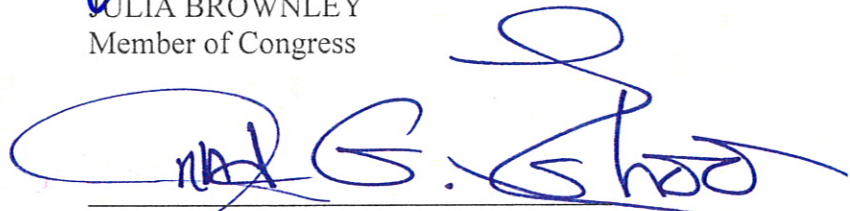
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Member of Congress



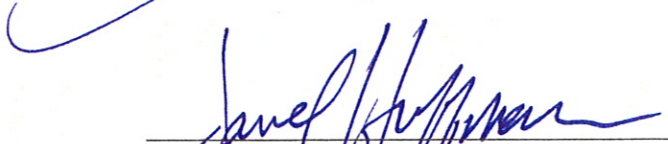
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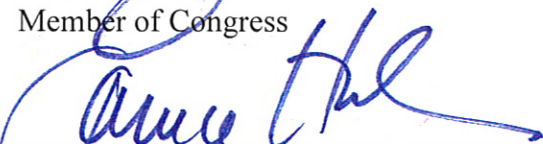
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Member of Congress



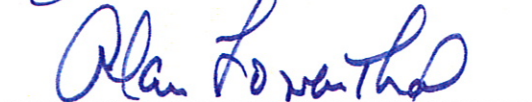
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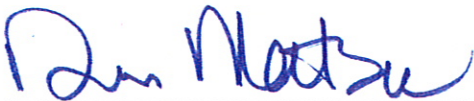
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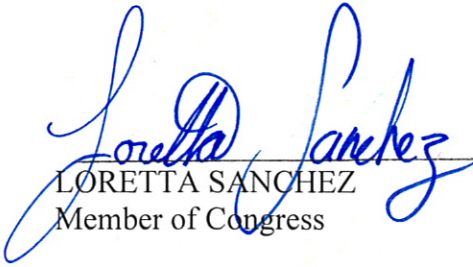


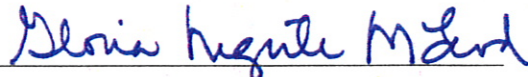
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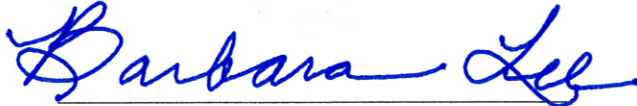
  
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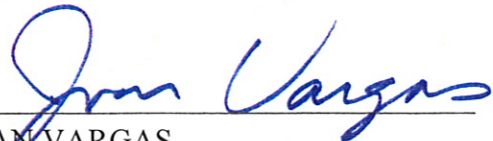
  
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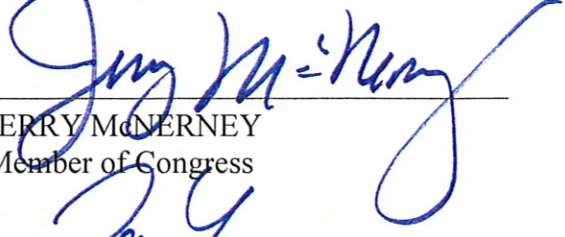
  
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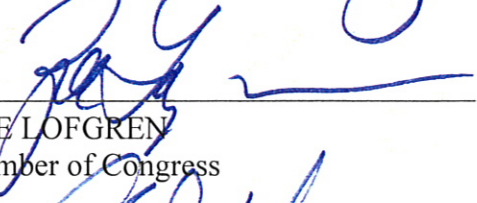
  
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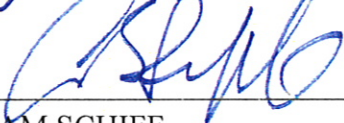
  
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