Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

October 23, 2014

The Honorable Harold Rogers
Chairman
House Committee on Appropriations
H-305, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Ranking Member
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jack Kingston
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
2358-B Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health, Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
1016 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representatives Rogers, Lowey, Kingston, and DeLauro,

We write to you to share our deep concerns about the insufficient funding levels for both the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The current Ebola virus and enterovirus D68 (EV-D68) crises underscore the urgent need for increased investment in medical research and adequate funding for response to public health emergencies. As you construct funding measures for consideration before this session of Congress closes in December, we implore you to prioritize these important programs.

Collectively, we lament that federal funding of the NIH has not kept up with inflation or necessity. In response to a question asked of him regarding the international Ebola crisis, NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins responded, "if we had not gone through our 10-year slide in research support, we probably would have had a vaccine in time for this that would have gone through clinical trials and would have been ready." It is not too late to appropriate to the NIH the resources it needs to continue its research on the Ebola virus or to continue, start, or renew its work on cancer, Alzheimer's, diabetes, Parkinson's, HIV/AIDS, stroke or any number of other threats to the health of Americans. It is also not too late to ensure that the CDC is adequately funded in order to react to and slow the spread of EV-D68, prevent an Ebola epidemic on American soil, and prepare for whatever public health emergency may come next. Increased funding for both of these invaluable government resources is integral both to slowing the spread of Ebola and EV-D68 as well as preventing future international health crises that will mimic or likely exceed the breadth of the current levels of devastation.

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While we understand that adequately funding the NIH and CDC is a serious financial undertaking for our nation, the fact remains that increased funding could likely result in vaccines, treatments, and cures that would otherwise not be discovered. Preventing disease saves money in healthcare costs far into the future and it also remains true that research advances will not be enjoyed wholly by our own generation, but by the millions of Americans who will come after us. This funding is so gravely important because the NIH and CDC combined serve as our nation's second department of defense. It is this line of defense that protects Americans from disease; and funding it is as important as funding the programs that protect Americans from other threats to our national security.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

Steve Cohen

Gwen Moore

Eric Swalwell

Elizabeth H. Esty

Filemon Vela

Peter P. Gallego

Ted Lieu

Kathy Castor

Frederica S. Wilson

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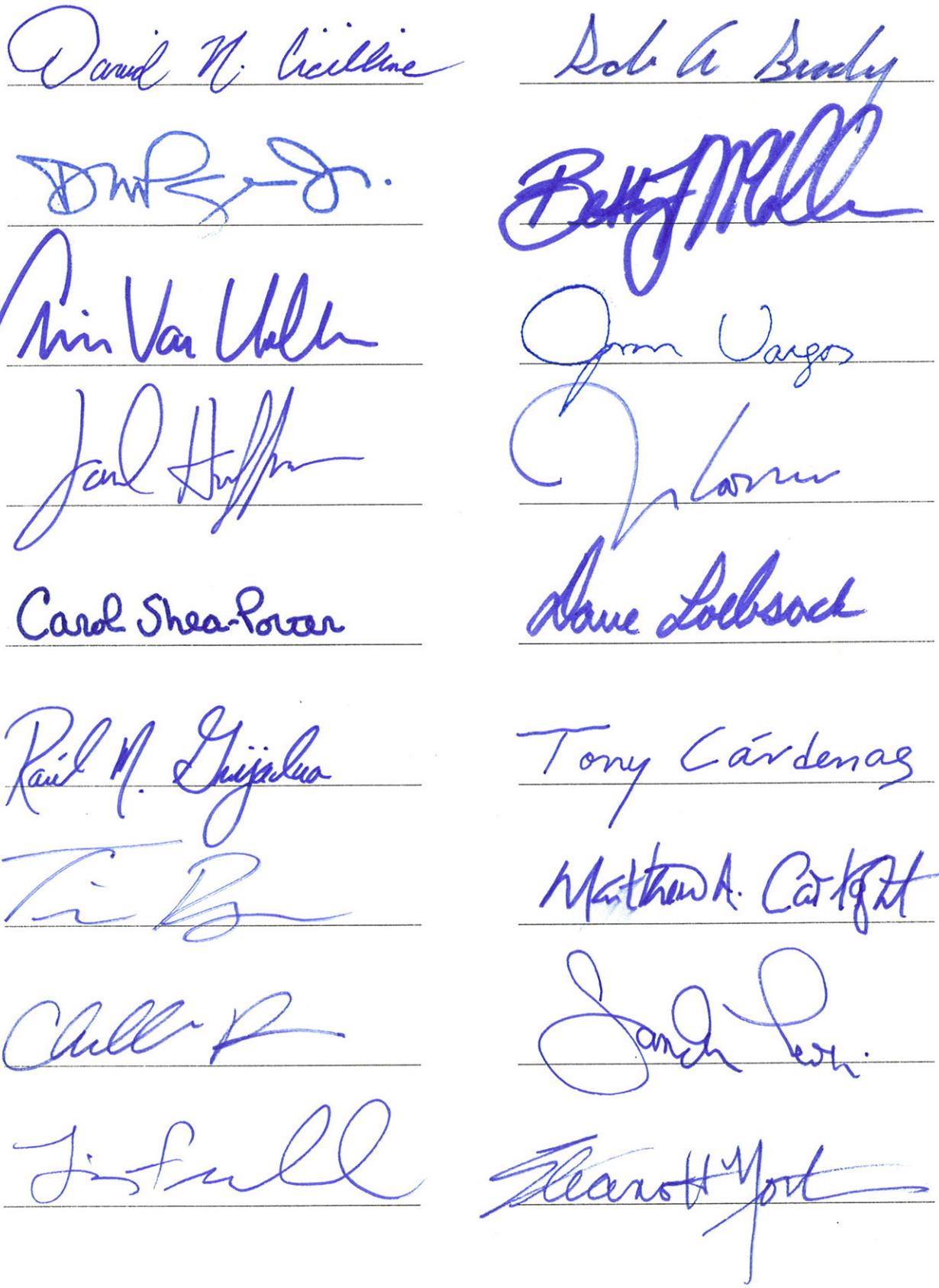

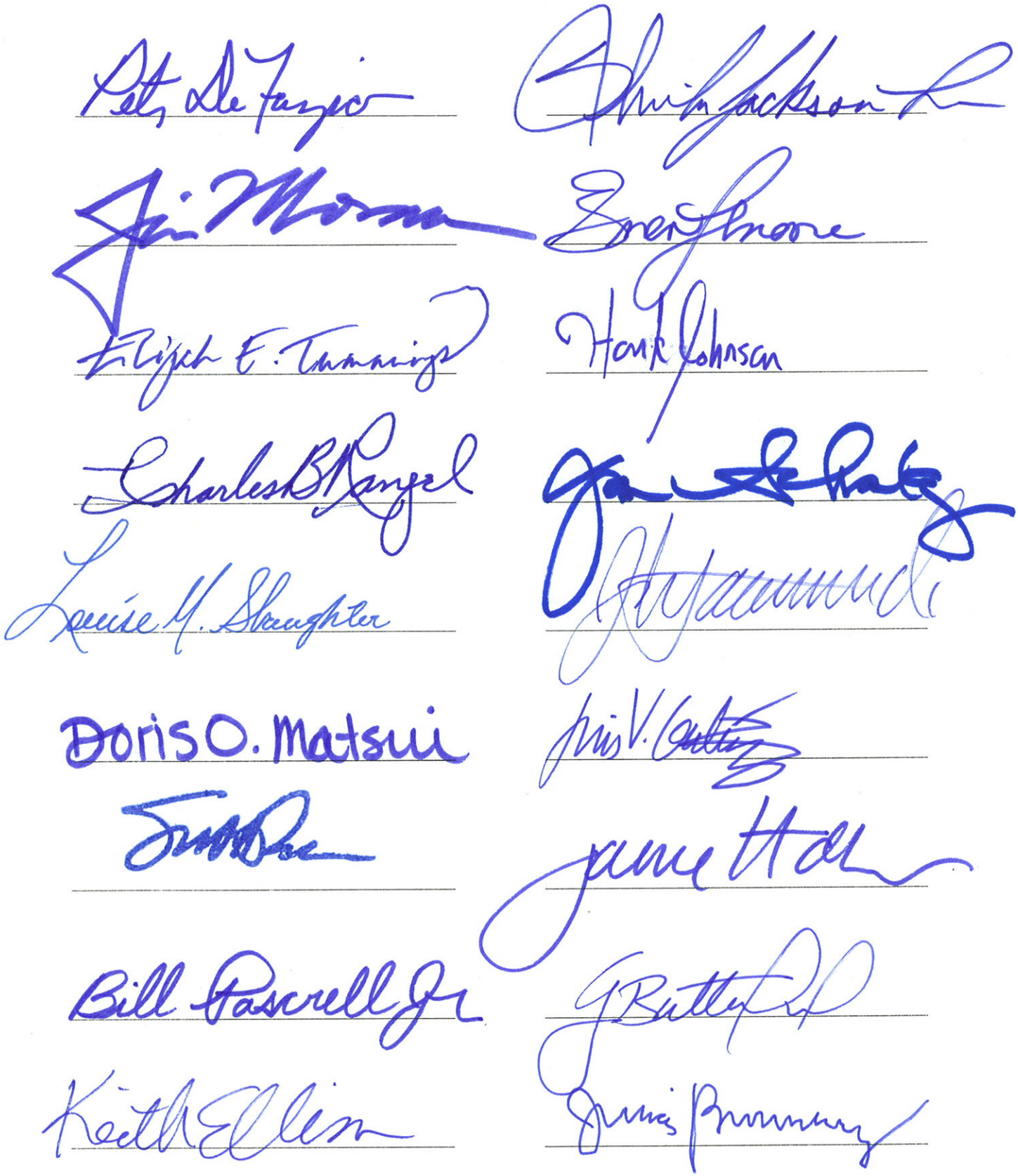

Doris O. Matsui