

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 8, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Office of the Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221, The Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid:

As the Senate continues its work on many important measures, we strongly urge you to end the procedural practice of allowing for a “silent filibuster” on legislation pending before the Senate. Currently, there are 290 House-passed bills that are awaiting action in the Senate – many of which are crucial pieces of legislation that will restore our financial institutions, reform our health care system, rebuild our nation’s infrastructure, end our dependence on foreign oil, and put Americans back to work. By ending the “silent filibuster”, a small group of obstructionist Senators who choose to block essential pieces of legislation will be forced to do so in the public eye, and commit substantial time and effort to the process.

As you know, a traditional filibuster requires both sides of the aisle to debate an issue openly on the Senate Floor, making their positions clear to the American people. Unfortunately, the current practice of a “silent filibuster” allows one side of the aisle – or one Senator – to avoid debate and silently block critically important legislation.

By providing anonymity and requiring almost no work, the practice of a “silent filibuster” incentivizes Senators to block pieces of legislation rather than work to craft a suitable compromise. This, in turn, has essentially brought the Senate legislative process to a grinding halt and caused an unprecedented backlog of hundreds of House-passed measures currently awaiting consideration on the Senate Floor.

We strongly urge you to end the practice of the “silent filibuster” and quickly bring the House-passed measures that are ready for consideration to the Senate Floor without fear of a filibuster. As the Senate Majority Leader, you have the right to call for a vote on any of these critically important pieces of legislation—and we urge you to exercise that right where it is appropriate.

This Congress has a choice between the failed policies of the past—tax breaks for the rich, deregulation of Wall Street and letting CEOs control health care—and the change this country truly deserves. If any Senator chooses to filibuster efforts to create jobs, crack down on Wall Street, and fix our broken health care system, then they must make that choice in full view of the American people and commit the time and effort required for such a procedure.

Thank you for considering our request and for your hard work on behalf of your state and the American people.

Sincerely,



Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress



Phil Hare
Member of Congress



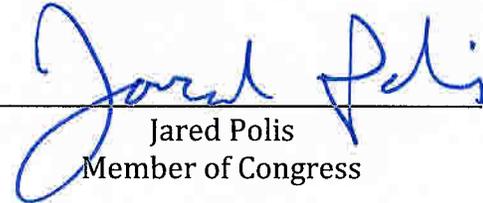
Peter Welch
Member of Congress



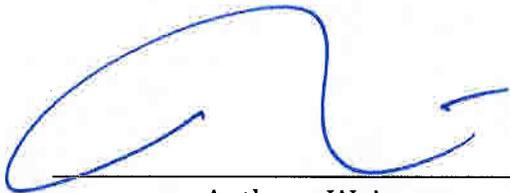
John Bocceri
Member of Congress



Carol Shea Porter
Member of Congress



Jared Polis
Member of Congress



Anthony Weiner
Member of Congress



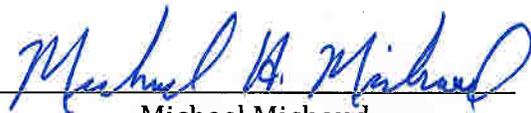
Niki Tsongas
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Jim Moran
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Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



Michael Michaud
Member of Congress



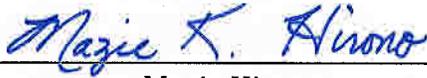
Betty Sutton
Member of Congress



Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress



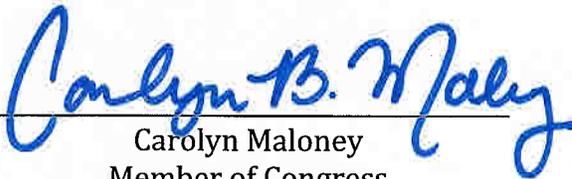
Laura Richardson
Member of Congress



Mazie Hirono
Member of Congress



Bobby L. Rush
Member of Congress



Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress



Martin Heinrich
Member of Congress



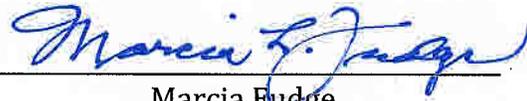
Peter DeFazio
Member of Congress



Leonard Boswell
Member of Congress



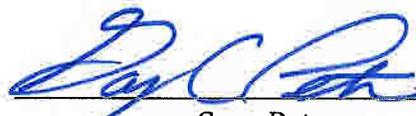
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



Marcia Fudge
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Mike Quigley
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Member of Congress



Hank Johnson
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Raúl Grijalva
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Earl Blumenauer
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Eleanor Holmes Norton
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Lucille Roybal-Allard

Lucille Roybal-Allard
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Jim McDermott
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Keith Ellison

Keith Ellison
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Paul P. Kanjorski

Paul Kanjorski
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