Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

February 2, 2010

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States of America
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, D.C. 20500

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader, U.S. Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives
H-232, U.S. Capitol
Washington, D.C. 20515

The Honorable Charles E. Schumer
Chairman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Refugees and Border Security
313 Hart Senate Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Zoe Lofgren
Chairwoman, Subcommittee on Immigration, Citizenship, Refugees, Border Security, and International Law
102 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear President Obama, Majority Leader Reid, Speaker Pelosi, Chairman Schumer, and Chairwoman Lofgren:

As members of the Congressional LGBT Equality Caucus, we are writing to express our strong support for a comprehensive immigration reform bill which would end discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) binational families. We urge Congress to include the *Uniting American Families Act* (H.R. 1024/S. 424) in any comprehensive immigration reform legislation.

Currently, U.S. citizens and legal permanent residents may sponsor their spouses (and other immediate family members) for immigration purposes. But, same-sex partners committed to spending their lives together are not recognized as "families" under U.S. immigration law and thus do not have this same right. As a result, tens of thousands of binational families are either already living separately, face imminent separation, or have left the U.S. entirely in order to

remain together. This is unacceptable, and we believe comprehensive immigration reform legislation must include a strong family reunification component inclusive of LGBT families.

According to 2000 census data compiled by the Williams Institute, an estimated 36,000 LGBT binational families are impacted by the inability to sponsor their partners for residency, and nearly half of those (47 percent) are raising children. Our existing, discriminatory immigration laws hurt not only those individuals, but their extended families, communities, and employers, as well. Not only would an inclusive family reunification provision strengthen American families, it would bolster the competitiveness of businesses in the U.S. by allowing corporations to attract, employ, and retain the very best talent from across the globe. Indeed, the U.S. lags behind 19 countries that already recognize same-sex couples for immigration purposes, including the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, and Germany.

In truth, no immigration reform bill can be called "comprehensive" unless it includes all Americans, including those who are LGBT. This is recognized in the *Reuniting Families Act* (H.R. 2709), which includes LGBT families in addressing the broader immigration problem of family unification.

We urge you to include LGBT binational families in comprehensive immigration reform legislation. No one should be forced to choose between the person they love and the country they call home. It is time that our immigration laws kept families together instead of tearing them apart.

Sincerely,

Tammy Baldwin
Member of Congress

Barney Frank
Member of Congress

Jared Polis
Member of Congress

Jerrold Nadler
Member of Congress

Mike Honda
Member of Congress

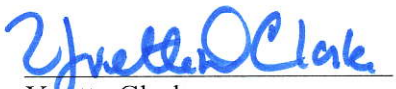
Mike Quigley
Member of Congress

James McGovern
Member of Congress

Raúl Grijalva
Member of Congress

Barbara Lee
Member of Congress

William Delahunt
Member of Congress



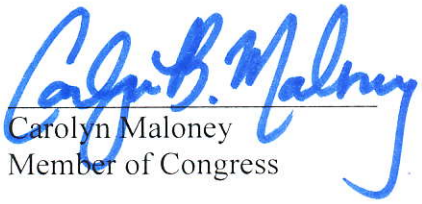
Yvette Clarke
Member of Congress

Keith Ellison
Member of Congress

James Moran
Member of Congress

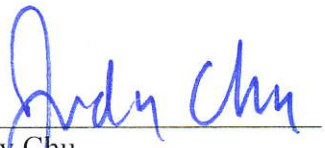
Lynn Woolsey
Member of Congress

Lois Capps
Member of Congress

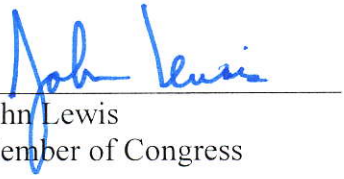


Carolyn Maloney
Member of Congress

Michael Doyle
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



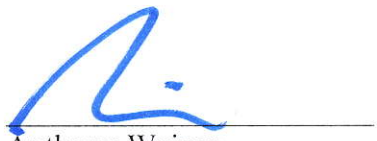
John Lewis
Member of Congress

Rush Holt
Member of Congress

Andre Carson
Member of Congress

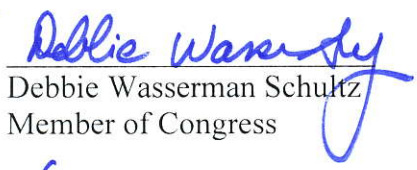
Jackie Speier
Member of Congress

Luis Gutierrez
Member of Congress



Anthony Weiner
Member of Congress

Neil Abercrombie
Member of Congress

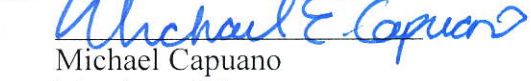


Debbie Wasserman Schultz
Member of Congress

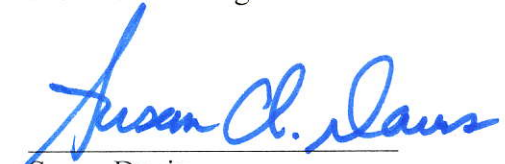
Eliot Engel
Member of Congress

Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress

Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress

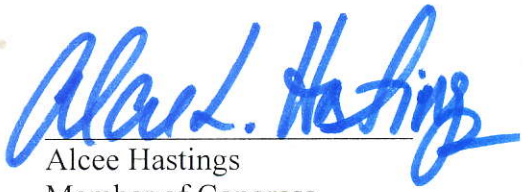


Michael Capuano
Member of Congress

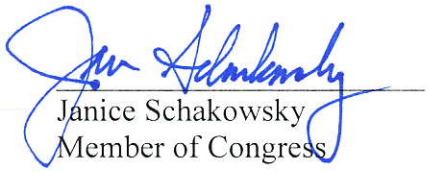


Susan Davis
Member of Congress

Edolphus Towns
Member of Congress



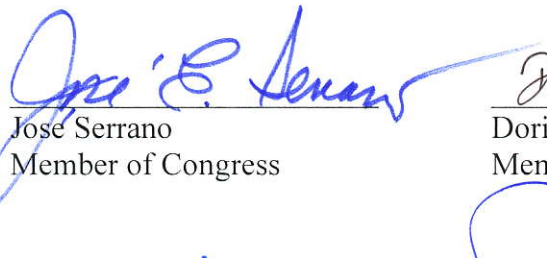
Alcee Hastings
Member of Congress



Janice Schakowsky
Member of Congress

Dennis Kucinich
Member of Congress

David Wu
Member of Congress

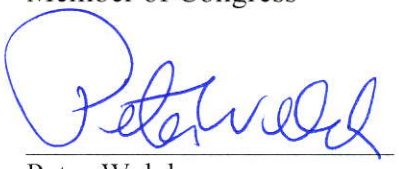


José Serrano
Member of Congress

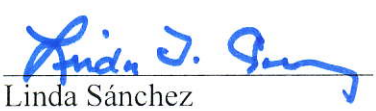
Doris Matsui
Member of Congress

Mazie Hirono
Member of Congress

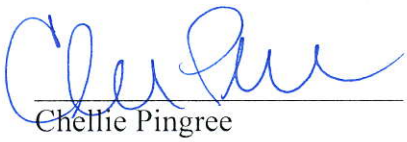
Phil Hare
Member of Congress



Peter Welch
Member of Congress



Linda Sánchez
Member of Congress

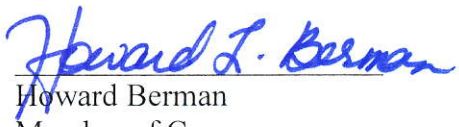


Chellie Pingree
Member of Congress

Brad Sherman
Member of Congress

Diana DeGette
Member of Congress

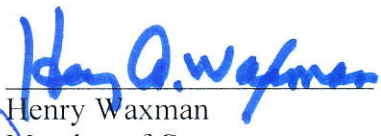
Bob Filner
Member of Congress



Howard Berman
Member of Congress

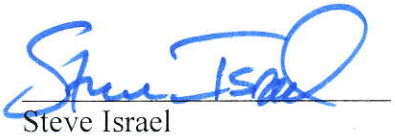
Fortney Pete Stark
Member of Congress

Shelley Berkley
Member of Congress

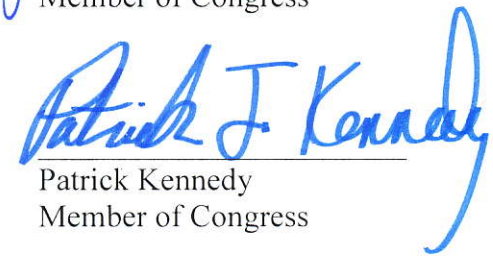


Henry Waxman
Member of Congress

Steve Rothman
Member of Congress



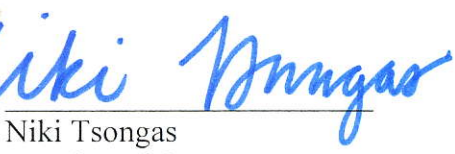
Steve Israel
Member of Congress



Patrick Kennedy
Member of Congress

Jane Harman
Member of Congress

Frank Pallone
Member of Congress



Niki Tsongas
Member of Congress

Jim McDermott
Member of Congress

Robert Brady
Member of Congress

Nydia Velázquez
Member of Congress

Nita Lowey
Member of Congress