

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

September 19, 2017

Senator Lamar Alexander  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Senator Patty Murray  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions  
United States Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Alexander and Ranking Member Murray,

We write today to share our strong support for community health centers and to urge swift resolution to the funding cliff community health centers face at the end of the month. Community health centers serve a critical role in communities throughout the United States and are important safety net providers. If Congress allows the Community Health Centers Fund (CHCF) to lapse, it would immediately threaten patient access to the cost-effective primary and preventive care health centers provide. We respectfully request you take immediate action to address CHCF funding.

Community health centers have long enjoyed strong bipartisan support. Since their initial creation over fifty years ago, community health centers have been a critical component of the nation's primary care network, today serving approximately 26 million patients at over 10,000 sites throughout the United States. Community health centers operate in both rural and urban areas, in every state in the nation, and are an important part of the health care ecosystem of their communities. Last year, health centers were the medical home for one in twelve Americans, one in ten children, one in six Americans living in rural areas, and more than 330,000 of our nation's veterans.

Congress' previous investments in the community health center program have yielded real results and vastly improved the health and well-being of countless communities throughout the United States. Without extension of the CHCF, community health centers will lose seventy percent of their funding. This will result in an estimated 2,800 site closures, the loss of 50,000 jobs, and result in 9 million Americans losing their access to care. Along with the health center impact, the National Health Service Corps and the Teaching Health Centers Graduate Medical Education programs are at risk of expiry. As small businesses, health centers need predictability to secure financing for capital projects, to sign contracts, to recruit and retain providers and staff, and to sustain operations. We are already hearing of the disruptive effects of the uncertainty created by the impending funding cliff on health center operations—this disruption will increase significantly without an extension of funding by September 30.

We believe the strong bipartisan support the community health center program receives every year is a strong indicator of the importance of the program to the nation. We stand ready to work with you to ensure that the CHCF continues to be a vibrant program that has improved the health and well-being of many of our nation's most vulnerable individuals and communities.

Thank you for your consideration of our thoughts. We stand ready to work with you to fund the community health center program to ensure no losses in health care access for the millions of Americans served by community health centers.

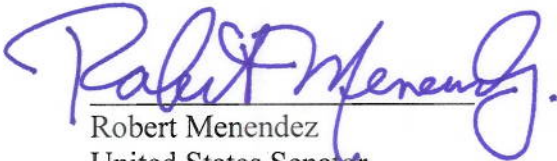
Sincerely,



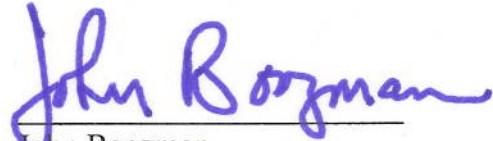
Debbie Stabenow  
United States Senator



Roy Blunt  
United States Senator



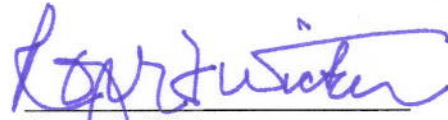
Robert Menendez  
United States Senator



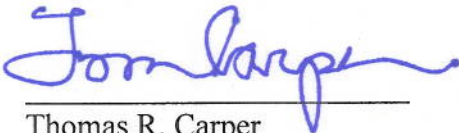
John Boozman  
United States Senator



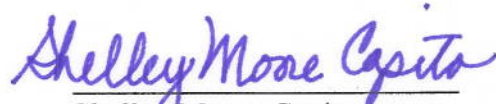
Bernard Sanders  
United States Senator



Roger F. Wicker  
United States Senator



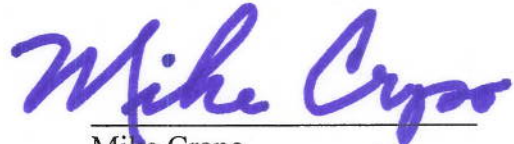
Thomas R. Carper  
United States Senator



Shelley Moore Capito  
United States Senator



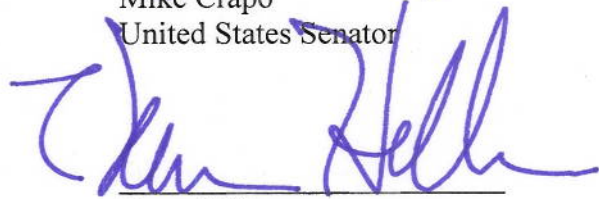
Benjamin L. Cardin  
United States Senator



Mike Crapo  
United States Senator

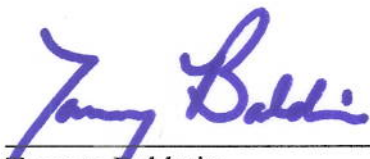


Sherrod Brown  
United States Senator

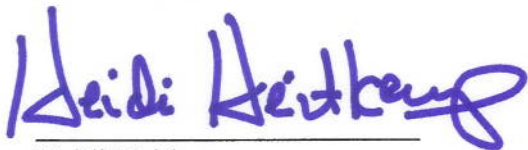


Dean Heller  
United States Senator





Tammy Baldwin  
United States Senator



Heidi Heitkamp  
United States Senator



Richard J. Durbin  
United States Senator



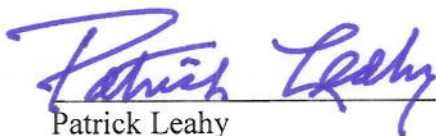
Michael F. Bennet  
United States Senator



Claire McCaskill  
United States Senator



Bill Nelson  
United States Senator



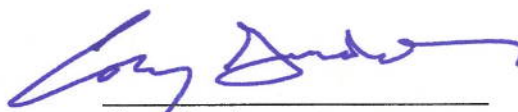
Patrick Leahy  
United States Senator



Bill Cassidy  
United States Senator



Thad Cochran  
United States Senator



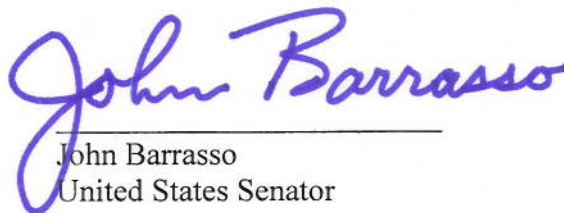
Cory Gardner  
United States Senator



Rob Portman  
United States Senator




Dan Sullivan  
United States Senator

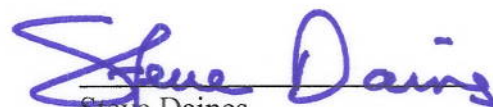


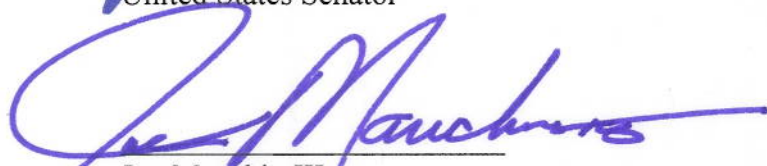
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United States Senator

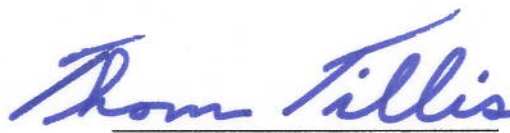


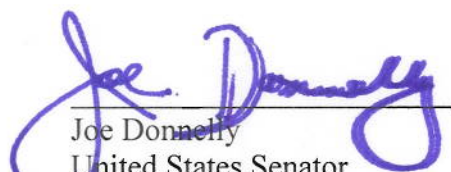
Deb Fischer  
United States Senator

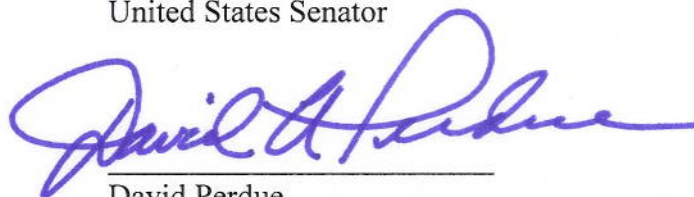
  
Jon Tester  
United States Senator

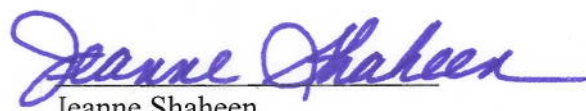
  
Steve Daines  
United States Senator


  
Joe Manchin III  
United States Senator


  
Thom Tillis  
United States Senator

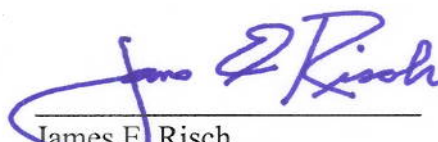
  
Joe Donnelly  
United States Senator

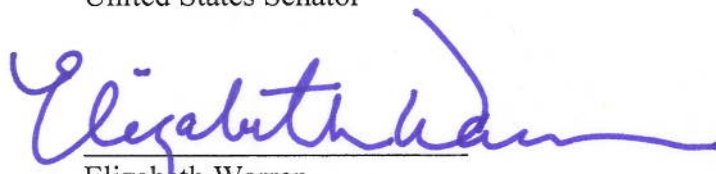
  
David Perdue  
United States Senator

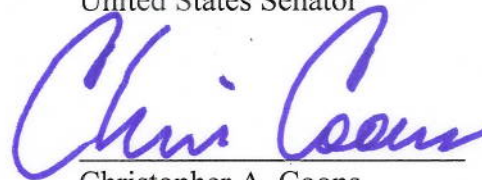
  
Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator


  
Susan M. Collins  
United States Senator

  
Richard Blumenthal  
United States Senator

  
James E. Risch  
United States Senator

  
Elizabeth Warren  
United States Senator

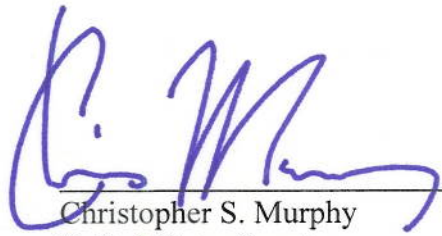
  
Christopher A. Coons  
United States Senator

  
Sheldon Whitehouse  
United States Senator

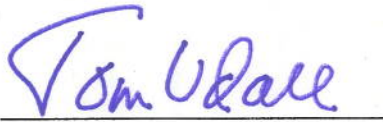
  
Mazie K. Hirono  
United States Senator



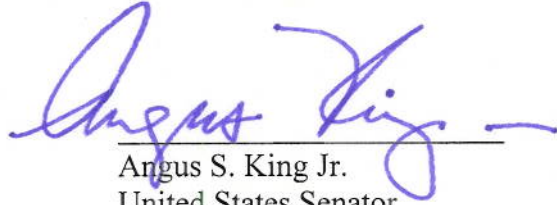
Martin Heinrich  
United States Senator



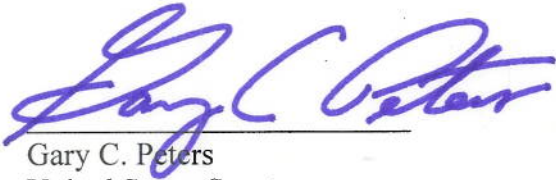
Christopher S. Murphy  
United States Senator



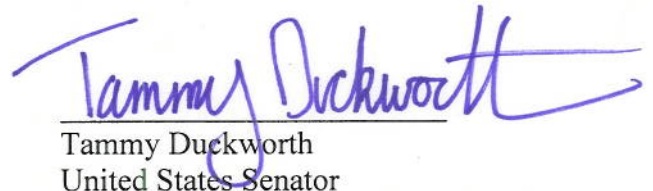
Tom Udall  
United States Senator



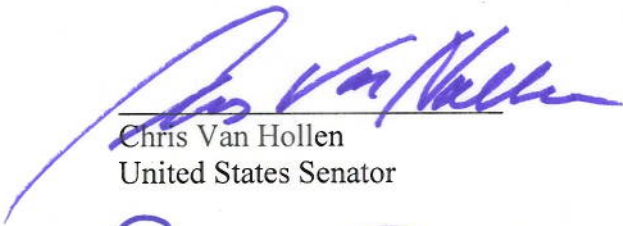
Angus S. King Jr.  
United States Senator



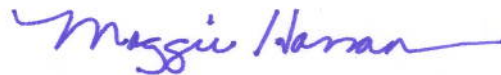
Gary C. Peters  
United States Senator



Tammy Duckworth  
United States Senator



Chris Van Hollen  
United States Senator



Margaret Wood Hassan  
United States Senator



Kamala D. Harris  
United States Senator



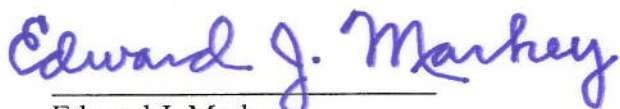
Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senator



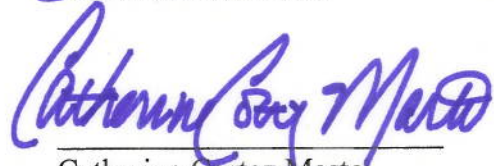
Kirsten Gillibrand  
United States Senator



Jack Reed  
United States Senator

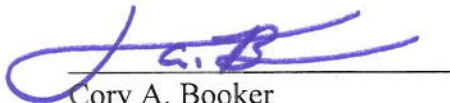


Edward J. Markey  
United States Senator

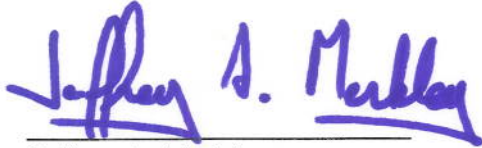


Catherine Cortez Masto  
United States Senator

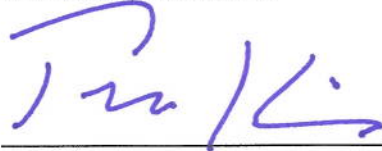




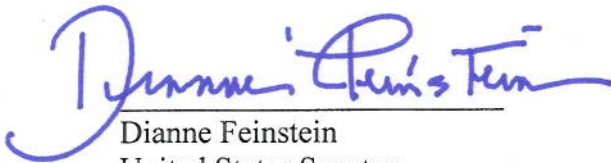
Cory A. Booker  
United States Senator



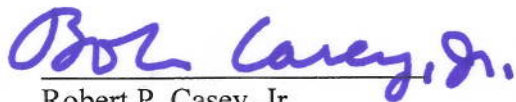
Jeffrey A. Merkley  
United States Senator



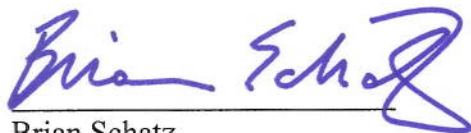
Tim Kaine  
United States Senator



Dianne Feinstein  
United States Senator



Robert P. Casey, Jr.  
United States Senator



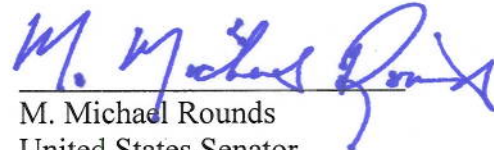
Brian Schatz  
United States Senator



Maria Cantwell  
United States Senator



John Hoeven  
United States Senator



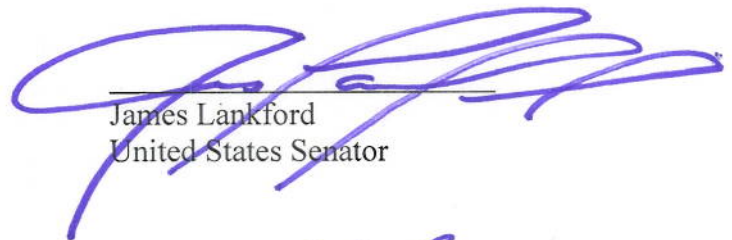
M. Michael Rounds  
United States Senator



John Kennedy  
United States Senator



James M. Inhofe  
United States Senator



James Lankford  
United States Senator



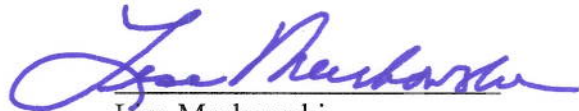
Michael B. Enzi  
United States Senator



Al Franken  
United States Senator



Mark R. Warner  
United States Senator



Lisa Murkowski  
United States Senator

Cc:

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell  
Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer