

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC

August 1, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave
Washington, DC 20500

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Ave SW
Washington, DC 20201

RE: National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health Staffing and Budget

Dear President Trump and Secretary Kennedy:

We write to provide updates on ongoing issues impacting the work of the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), following your Administration's termination decisions earlier this year. On April 1, 2025, more than 90 percent of NIOSH's staff were placed on administrative leave as part of major cuts at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) initiated by Secretary Kennedy and the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE). While a small portion of NIOSH's staff have been reinstated, the agency remains unable to accomplish its statutory obligations to the public.

We have heard from many terminated NIOSH employees who have not been reinstated and expecting to soon be separated from the agency, and have seen numerous reports detailing ways NIOSH's work remains non-functional due to cancelled federal contracts, budget cuts, and essential work within NIOSH that has not been restarted. For example:

- While most of the staff at NIOSH's National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory received notice of their reinstatement, the department is finding it virtually impossible to resume its operations due to agency-wide cuts. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) acquisition office was almost entirely cut through initial Reduction in Force (RIF) plans, which is responsible for facilitating equipment service agreements and calibration contracts, and purchasing lab supplies, and more.
- NIOSH scientists study the impacts of diacetyl exposure,¹ which is a hazardous chemical used in various applications including food flavoring, and just this one program requires five or more divisions operating different steps of the process. We have heard reports that one team in this program was reinstated, but none of the chemists have been, so they

¹ The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), CDC. "Criteria for a Recommended Standard: Occupational Exposure to Diacetyl and 2,3-Pentanedione." Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2016-111/default.html>

cannot take any samples – rendering the program non-functional. To complete this congressionally-mandated process, many NIOSH Divisions operate in tandem. The same concerns apply to other NIOSH programs and studies, like the work to study wildland fire smoke exposure among farmworkers and other outdoor workers.²

As illustrated by these examples, much of the essential work NIOSH does greatly depends on cross-agency and cross-divisional work. By not fully reinstating NIOSH employees, contractors, and funding, the Administration is failing to uphold its statutory obligations to the public. These losses will directly impact employers' ability to protect workers from ongoing and emerging threats, reduce government efficiency, and increase risks for American businesses.

We are also greatly concerned with the Administration's Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) HHS Budget Justification Estimates for the Appropriations Committees.³ The proposed FY26 budget seeks to reduce NIOSH's funding by 80 percent, allocating just \$73.2 million beginning on October 1, 2025 – a severe cut from the FY25 budget of \$362.8 million. The proposed budget completely eliminates funding for many of NIOSH's essential divisions including the National Personal Protective Technology Laboratory – which is responsible for approving respirators across the country.

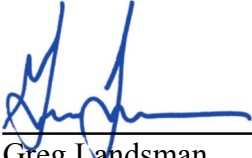
Millions of American workers in a wide range of industries depend on respiratory protection to safeguard their health against workplace hazards from silica, wildfire smoke, lead, asbestos and other toxic chemicals to infectious diseases. Respirators are often the last line of defense between workers and disabling acute and chronic illness and death. The proposed budget from the Administration would have long-lasting negative outcomes on the health and well-being of all workers in the United States. The House and Senate Appropriations Committees will release proposed appropriation legislation for FY26 in the coming weeks, and we look forward to the opportunity to bring to the public's attention the indispensable work NIOSH does to serve the public and protect workers across the nation.

The work of NIOSH employees and contractors plays a critical role in worker safety and has enormous economic impacts in communities across the country. Effectively, the federal government presently has little to no ability to assess and protect the health and wellbeing of our workforce. We are deeply concerned about what this means for the health of every single working person in this country, and as such, we urge the full restoration of NIOSH's workforce and programs.

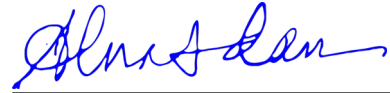
Sincerely,

² The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH), CDC. "Draft Hazard Review: Wildland Fire Smoke Exposure Among Farmworkers and Other Outdoor Workers." Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/niosh/docket/review/docket352a/default.html>

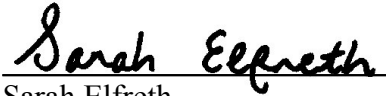
³ Department of Health and Human Services, Fiscal Year 2026, "Administration for a Healthy America: Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees." Published June 9, 2025. Available at: <https://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/fy-2026-aha-cj.pdf>



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



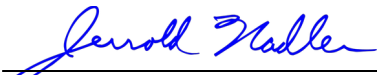
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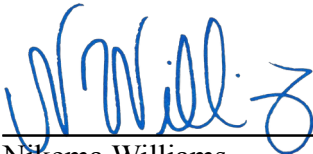
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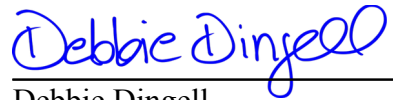
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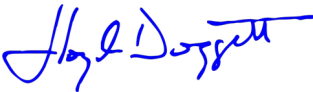
Debbie Dingell
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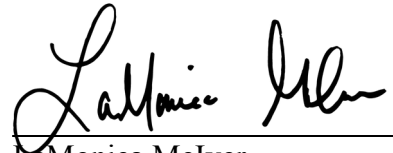
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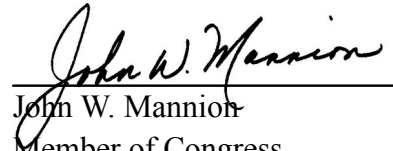
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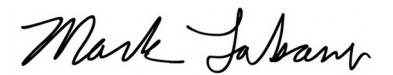
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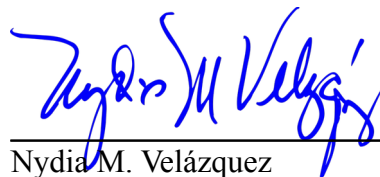
Becca Balint
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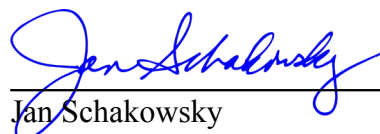
Stephen F. Lynch
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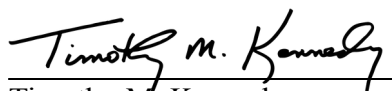
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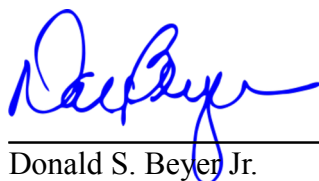
Maxine Dexter
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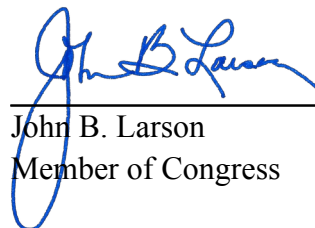
J. Luis Correa
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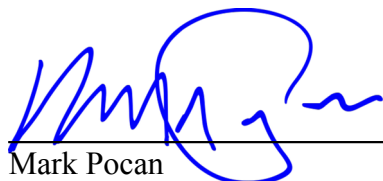
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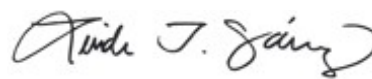
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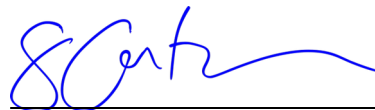
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



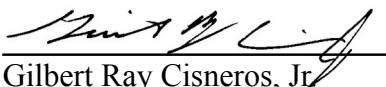
Lori Trahan
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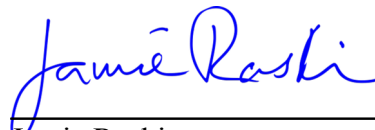
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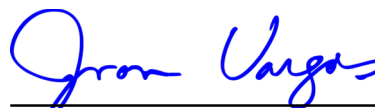
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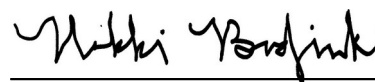
Norma J. Torres
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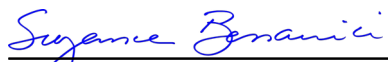
Juan Vargas
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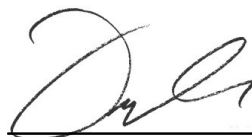
Angie Craig
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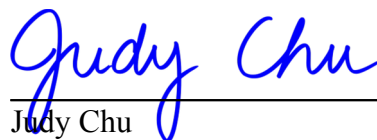
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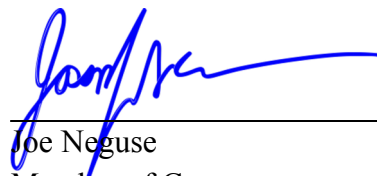
Dina Titus
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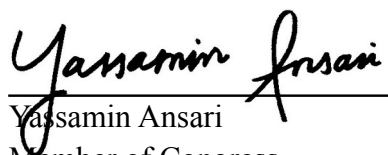
Judy Chu
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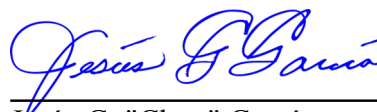
Bill Foster
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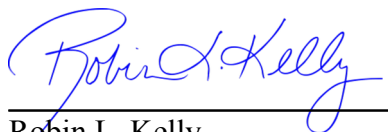
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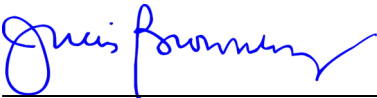
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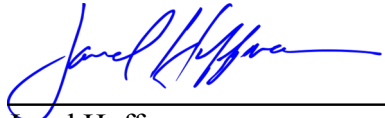
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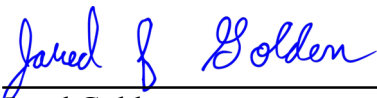
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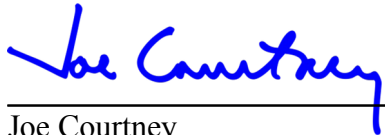
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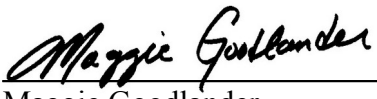
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Wesley Bell
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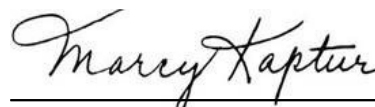
Shri Thanedar
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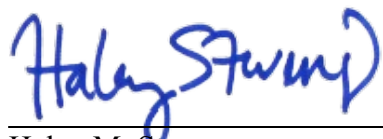
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Nanette Diaz Barragán
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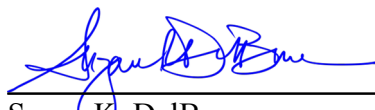
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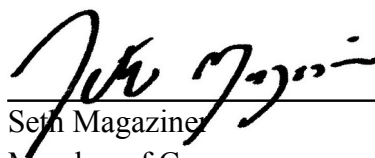
Robert J. Menendez
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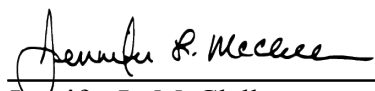
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Seth Magaziner
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Robert Garcia
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Sylvia R. Garcia
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Andrea Salinas
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Gwen S. Moore
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Danny K. Davis
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Eric Sorensen
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Gabe Amo
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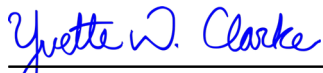
Thomas R. Suozzi
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Jim Costa
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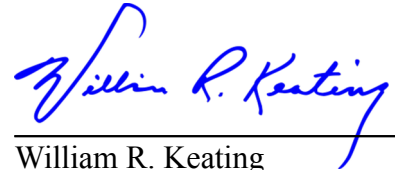
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