

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

February 26, 2025

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20500

Secretary Doug Burgum
Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington DC 20240

Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr.
Department of Health and Human Services
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.
Washington, D.C. 20201

Dear President Trump, Secretary Burgum, and Secretary Kennedy:

We write to you today to urge you to take immediate action to halt, exempt, and reverse from existing or future executive actions any federal offices, services, or funding that serve Indian Country, as these positions and programs are essential to the administration of legally mandated Tribal programs and services.

We are gravely concerned about the implementation of recent Executive Orders (EO), including EO 14210 entitled *“Implementing the President’s “Department of Government Efficiency” Workforce Optimization Initiative,”* and the implications of reductions in the federal workforce and funding for Indian Country. As you know, the U.S. government has both trust and treaty responsibilities to Tribal Nations. These responsibilities are implemented by agencies including the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA), Bureau of Indian Education (BIE), Indian Health Service (IHS), and others, providing critical healthcare, education, and social services to Tribal communities. Your administration’s recent executive actions undermine legally required commitments to sovereign Tribal Nations, existing federal law, and the federal-Tribal government-to-government relationship.

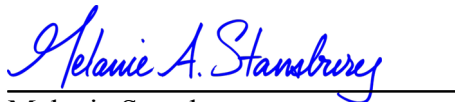
In the past month, your administration has taken aim at thousands of federal workers across various government agencies. Reports indicate that this includes more than 2,600 federal employees at the Department of the Interior, including more than 100 Bureau of Indian Affairs employees, more than 40 Bureau of Indian Education employees, several employees at the Office of Indian Affairs, as well as social workers, firefighters, and police that work on behalf of Indian Country, plus some 950 Indian Health Service employees at the Department of Health and Human Services. There have also been reports of layoffs at Tribal Colleges and Universities, including dozens of educators at both Haskell Indian Nations University and Southwestern Indian Polytechnic Institute which are operated by the Bureau of Indian Education.

Independent federal oversight entities, such as the Office of the Special Counsel, have already deemed some of these firings to be unlawful. Beyond the legal questions surrounding the ability to fire employees without specifying performance or conduct issues, any unilateral attempts to disrupt existing services administered or funded by the BIA, BIE, IHS, or other Tribal-serving entities would directly violate the trust and treaty obligations of the United States to Tribal Nations.

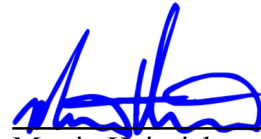
Tribal Nations are sovereign governments with a unique legal and political relationship to the United States. The inherent sovereignty of Tribes is recognized in the U.S. Constitution, in treaties, and across many federal laws and policies, and it has been consistently upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. These trust and treaty obligations in some cases predate both the establishment of all of the agencies in question as well as the United States itself. Pursuant to those legal obligations, the U.S. must adequately fund and staff agencies that provide these essential services and programs, including at BIA, BIE, and IHS.

We have many concerns about the legality of the administration's recent actions and, importantly, the ways in which those actions impact the sovereignty, self-determination, and trust and treaty obligations for Indian Country. The implementation of these obligations is a vital, non-discretionary part of federal law and the federal budget. This is not a partisan issue. We urge your administration to immediately halt, exempt, and reverse any federal workforce or federal funding reductions for Tribal programs or services and to engage in formal consultation with affected Tribal Nations at the government-to-government level. Any attempts to unilaterally dismantle or undermine these programs violates trust and treaty obligations, the U.S. Constitution, and centuries of legal precedent.

Sincerely,



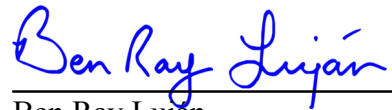
Melanie Stansbury
Member of Congress



Martin Heinrich
United States Senator



Charles E. Schumer
United States Senator



Ben Ray Lujan
United States Senator



Michael F. Bennet
United States Senator



Bernard Sanders
United States Senator



John Hickenlooper
United States Senator



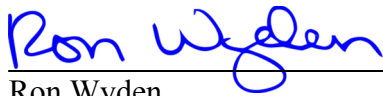
Amy Klobuchar
United States Senator



Adam B. Schiff
United States Senator



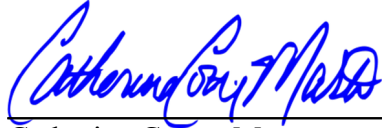
Ruben Gallego
United States Senator



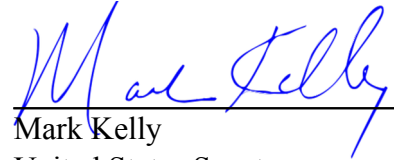
Ron Wyden
United States Senator



Alex Padilla
United States Senator



Catherine Cortez Masto
United States Senator



Mark Kelly
United States Senator



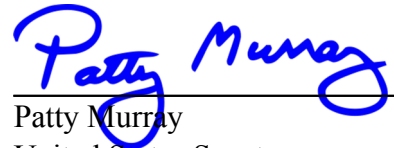
Tina Smith
United States Senator



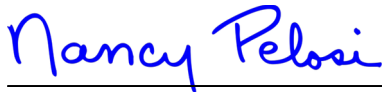
Jeffrey A. Merkley
United States Senator



Jacky Rosen
United States Senator



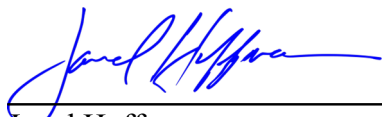
Patty Murray
United States Senator



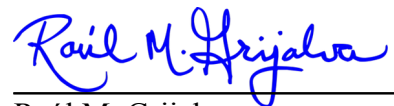
Nancy Pelosi
Member of Congress



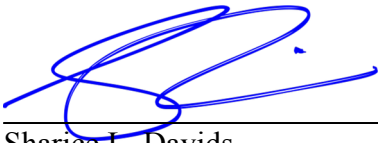
Joe Neguse
Member of Congress



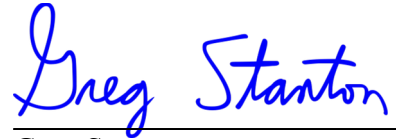
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress
Ranking Member, House Natural
Resources Committee



Raúl M. Grijalva
Member of Congress



Sharice L. Davids
Member of Congress
Kansas Third District



Greg Stanton
Member of Congress



Laura Friedman
Member of Congress



Delia C. Ramirez
Member of Congress



Jennifer L. McClellan
Member of Congress



Timothy M. Kennedy
Member of Congress



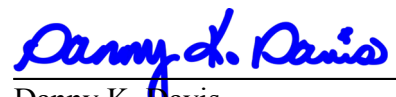
Jesús G. "Chuy" García
Member of Congress



Henry C. "Hank" Johnson, Jr.
Member of Congress



Ed Case
Member of Congress



Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress



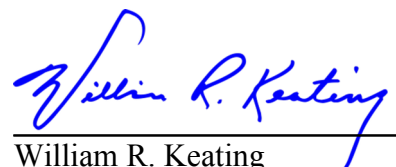
Terri A. Sewell
Member of Congress



Veronica Escobar
Member of Congress



Gwen S. Moore
Member of Congress



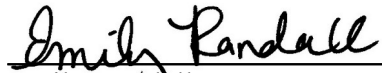
William R. Keating
Member of Congress



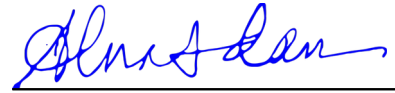
Eleanor Holmes Norton
Member of Congress



Yassamin Ansari
Member of Congress



Emily Randall
Member of Congress



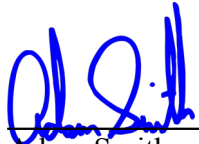
Alma S. Adams, Ph.D.
Member of Congress



Val Hoyle
Member of Congress



JM Tokuda
Member of Congress



Adam Smith
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress



Rashida Tlaib
Member of Congress



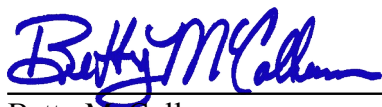
Raul Ruiz, M.D.
Member of Congress



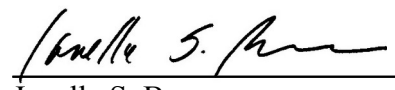
Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress



Gabe Vasquez
Member of Congress



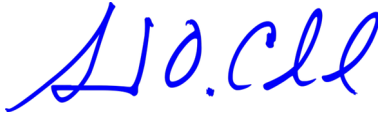
Betty McCollum
Member of Congress



Janelle S. Bynum
Member of Congress



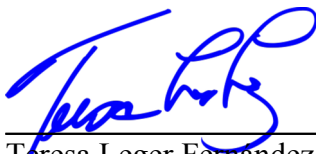
Shri Thanedar
Member of Congress



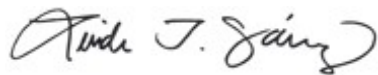
Salud Carbajal
Member of Congress



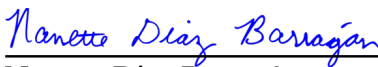
Robert Garcia
Member of Congress



Teresa Leger Fernandez
Member of Congress



Linda T. Sánchez
Member of Congress



Nanette Diaz Barragán
Member of Congress



Andrea Salinas
Member of Congress



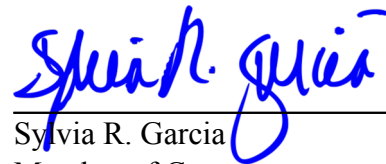
Dina Titus
Member of Congress



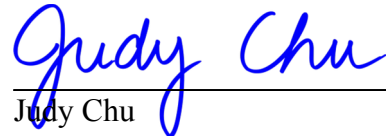
Luz M. Rivas
Member of Congress



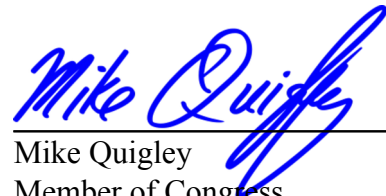
Nydia M. Velázquez
Member of Congress



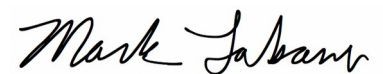
Sylvia R. Garcia
Member of Congress



Judy Chu
Member of Congress



Mike Quigley
Member of Congress



MARK TAKANO
Member of Congress



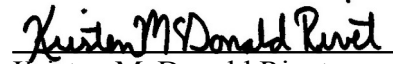
Kevin Mullin
Member of Congress



Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



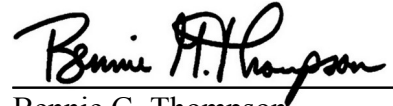
Robin L. Kelly
Member of Congress



Kristen McDonald Rivet
Member of Congress



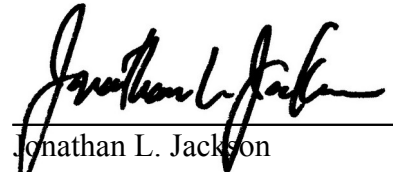
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



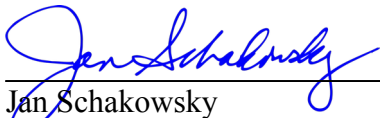
Bennie G. Thompson
Member of Congress



Marc A. Veasey
Member of Congress



Jonathan L. Jackson
Member of Congress



Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



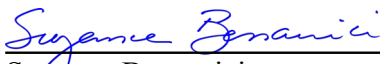
Haley M. Stevens
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



Diana DeGette
Member of Congress




Suzanne Bonamici
Member of Congress



Becca Balint
Member of Congress



Andre Carson
Member of Congress



Shontel M. Brown
Member of Congress



Derek T. Tran
Member of Congress



Pramila Jayapal
Member of Congress



Mikie Sherrill
Member of Congress



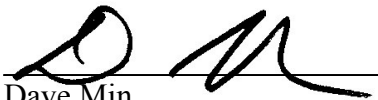
Suhas Subramanyam
Member of Congress



Mike Levin
Member of Congress



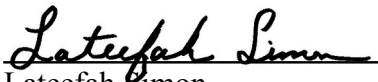
Julia Brownley
Member of Congress



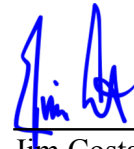
Dave Min
Member of Congress



John Garamendi
Member of Congress



Lateefah Simon
Member of Congress



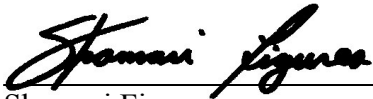
Jim Costa
Member of Congress



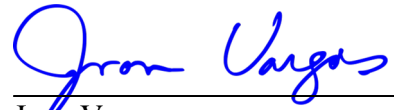
Valerie P. Foushee
Member of Congress



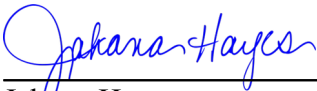
Kathy Castor
Member of Congress



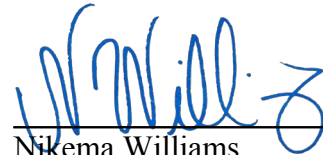
Shomari Figures
Member of Congress



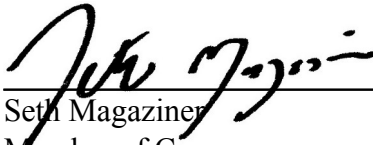
Juan Vargas
Member of Congress



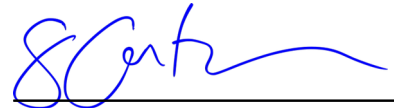
Jahana Hayes
Member of Congress



Nikema Williams
Member of Congress



Seth Magaziner
Member of Congress



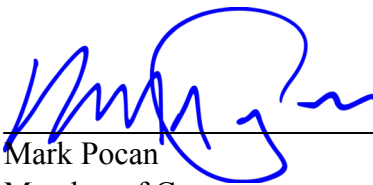
Sean Casten
Member of Congress



Sarah McBride
Member of Congress



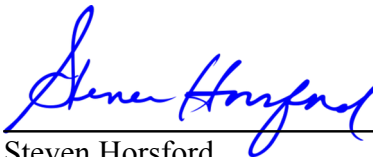
Brad Sherman
Member of Congress



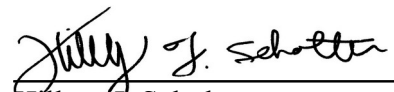
Mark Pocan
Member of Congress



Ro Khanna
Member of Congress



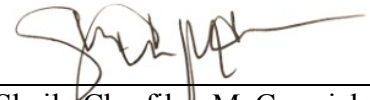
Steven Horsford
Member of Congress
Nevada's Fourth Congressional
District



Hillary J. Scholten
Member of Congress



Maxine Dexter
Member of Congress



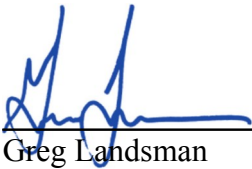
Sheila Cherfilus-McCormick
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



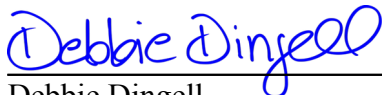
Darren Soto
Member of Congress



Greg Landsman
Member of Congress



Doris Matsui
Member of Congress



Debbie Dingell
Member of Congress