

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

September 29, 2009

The Honorable Eric K. Shinseki
Secretary of Veterans Affairs
U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
801 Vermont Avenue, NW
Washington, DC 20420

Dear Secretary Shinseki,

As Members of the California delegation, we are extremely concerned that thousands of veterans have not received their benefit checks to pay for their college tuition. When the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill was enacted in July of 2008, we promised our veterans up to four years of education benefits at a college or university along with a monthly housing allowance and an annual books and supplies stipend.

However, we are now being informed that many of our veterans are dropping out of school or having to pay for their own tuition and books because the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) was not able to process all the claims in time to send the veterans their benefit checks. It is extremely concerning that despite all the preparation, the VA was unable to successfully provide our veterans with the funding for the education that they earned by serving our country. It is also alarming that the VA did not provide advance notice to the veterans or the schools that the issuance of benefit checks would be delayed. Although the VA has recently taken positive steps to provide emergency benefits for books and housing, the delay in tuition benefits has yet to be addressed. It is imperative that the VA make the necessary changes to the actual system in order to avoid future benefit delays for our veterans.

Currently, many veterans have had to use their personal funds to pay for their tuition, books or housing due to the VA's inability to process their applications in a timely manner. Please respond with detailed information about how the VA will ensure that these veterans are reimbursed for the expenses that should have been covered by the VA, and how the Department is planning to address the remaining applications that need to be processed. In addition, we urge the VA to work with all the relevant colleges and universities to ensure that affected veterans are able to remain in school even if their tuition has not been paid. It is imperative that the VA keep our veterans informed of any information that may affect their education or benefits.

Our veterans are depending on these education benefits and it is imperative that we keep our promises to the veterans who have sacrificed so much for our country. We appreciate your immediate attention to this urgent issue.

Sincerely,

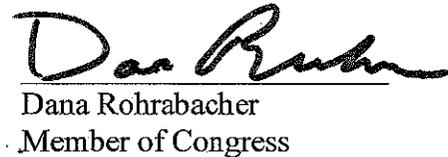

Loretta Sanchez
Member of Congress


Howard "Buck" McKeon
Member of Congress

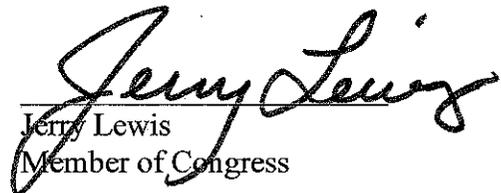

Bob Filner
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Zoe Lofgren
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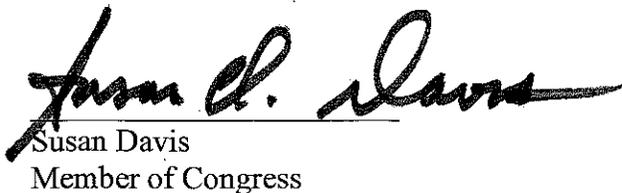

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Jerry Lewis
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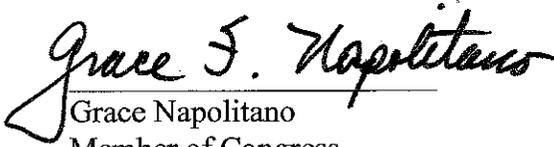

Mary Bono Mack
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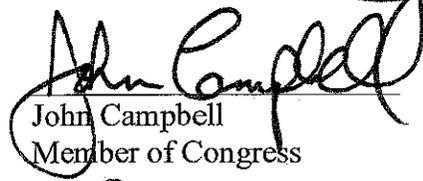
Sam Farr
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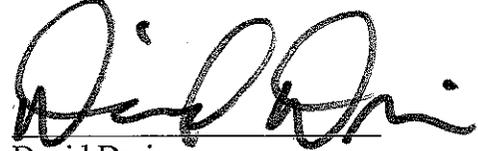
Grace Napolitano
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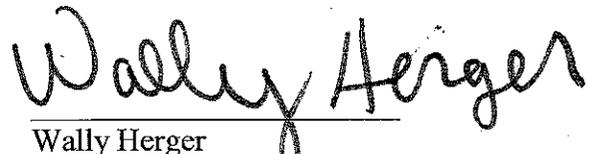
Lucille Roybal-Allard
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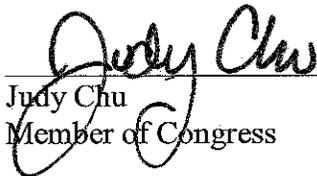
David Dreier
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Brad Sherman
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Wally Herger
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Judy Chu
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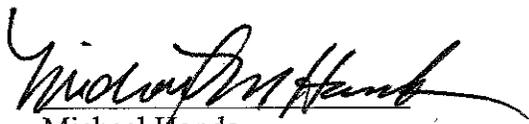
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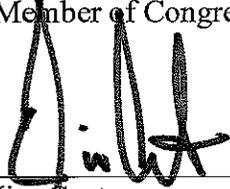
Doris Matsui
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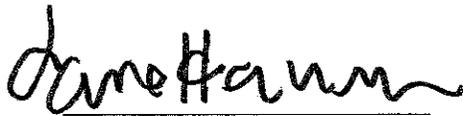
Lynn Woolsey
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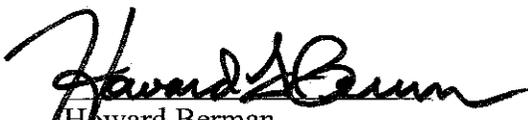
Maxine Waters
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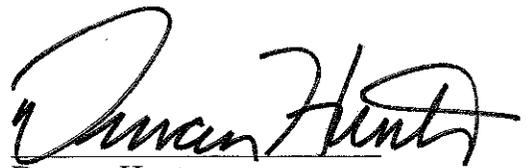
Jane Harman
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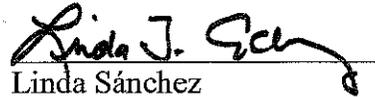
Laura Richardson
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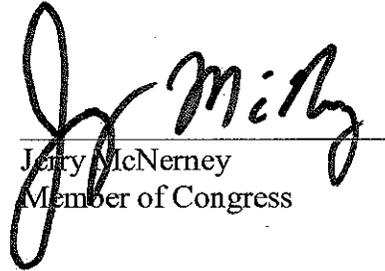
Howard Berman
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Duncan Hunter
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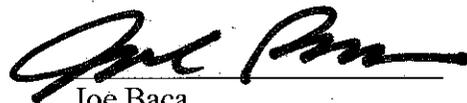
Linda Sánchez
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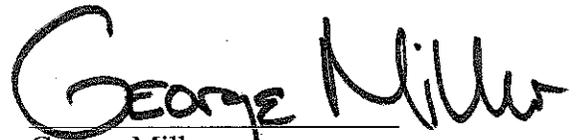
Jerry McNerney
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Adam Schiff
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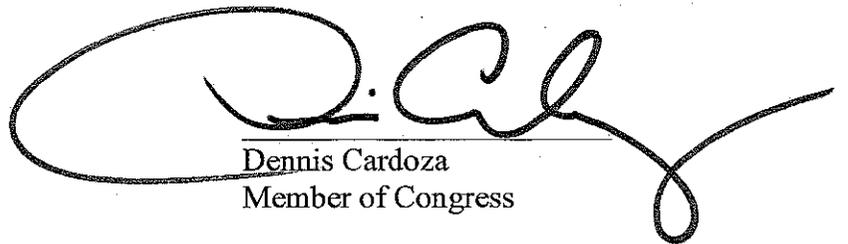
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Dennis Cardoza
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