

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 27, 2019

The Honorable Nita Lowey
Chairwoman
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Tim Ryan
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jaime Herrera Beutler
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on the
Legislative Branch
U.S. House of Representatives
H-307, the Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Lowey, Chairman Ryan, and Ranking Members Granger and Herrera Beutler,

We are writing to urge you to begin restoring funding to the Office of Technology Assessment (OTA) in the Fiscal Year 2020 Legislative Branch Appropriations bill. For more than two decades the OTA provided relevant, unbiased technical and scientific assessments for Members of Congress and staff. Today, a restored OTA would offer policy makers the tools to tackle and understand new technological developments and their public policy implications.

The OTA is still authorized, but the office was defunded in 1995, stripping Congress of a valuable resource that understood both emerging technologies as well as the intricacies of the legislative process and the needs of policy makers. The OTA is unique in that its mission enables it to conduct in-depth analysis with extensive input from external experts providing forward-looking and comprehensive assessment of new technologies.

In its absence, the need for the OTA has only grown. Over twenty years after OTA was defunded, Congress is grappling with questions around how to encourage innovation while minimizing the potential harms of new technologies. A restored OTA could help Congress develop thoughtful, targeted policy around emerging technologies, including autonomous vehicles and face recognition. As complex advances in science and technology continue, Congress should have access to OTA's thorough and nonpartisan analysis to help us find the right path forward.

Funding the OTA is a wise investment for the future. In the last year it operated, the total budget for the OTA was \$23 million, but the savings that the OTA has created for the

federal government have gone well beyond that level. Recommendations from a study on computer upgrades at the Social Security Administration led to a savings of over \$350 million, and studies on the Synthetic Fuel Corporation led to its repeal, saving the federal government tens of billions of dollars.

We ask that you begin restoring funding, from the Subcommittee's allocation, to the OTA Account for startup costs to begin rebuilding the office in Fiscal Year 2020. These funds will better prepare Congress to account for emerging technologies in the legislative process and allow us to make informed policy decisions. Thank you for your consideration and your leadership on the Legislative Branch Appropriations Subcommittee.


Sincerely,



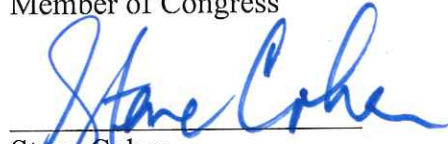
Bill Foster
Member of Congress



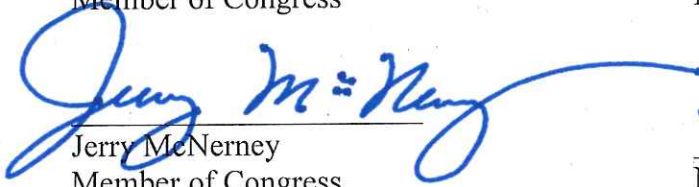
Mark Takano
Member of Congress



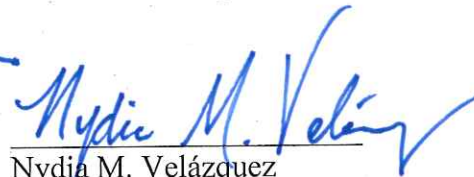
Yvette D. Clarke
Member of Congress



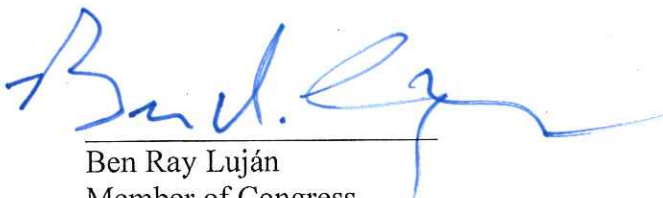
Steve Cohen
Member of Congress



Jerry McNerney
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Nydia M. Velázquez
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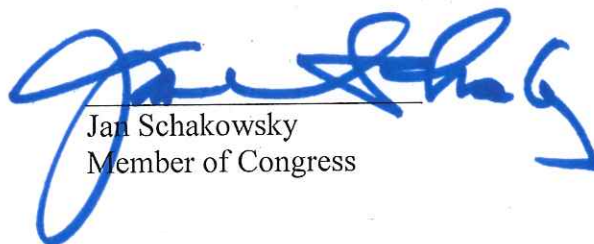
Ben Ray Luján
Member of Congress




Suzan DelBene
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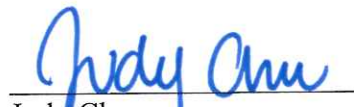



Alcee L. Hastings
Member of Congress



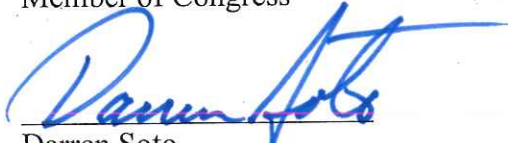
Jan Schakowsky
Member of Congress



Bill Pascrell, Jr.
Member of Congress


Judy Chu
Member of Congress

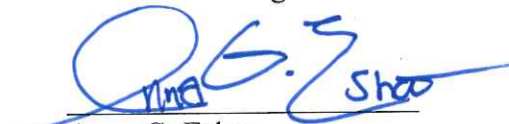

Tony Cárdenas
Member of Congress

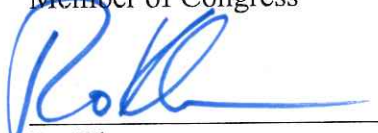

Zoe Lofgren
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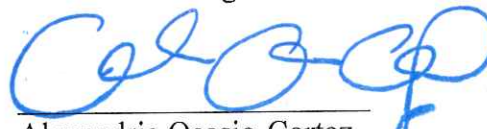

Darren Soto
Member of Congress

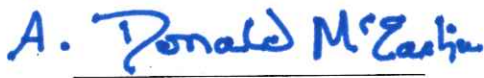

Donald M. Payne, Jr.
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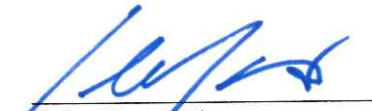

Alan Lowenthal
Member of Congress

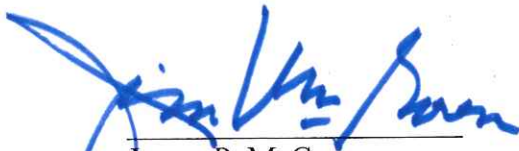

Anna G. Eshoo
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Ro Khanna
Member of Congress

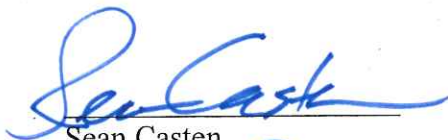

Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez
Member of Congress


A. Donald McEachin
Member of Congress

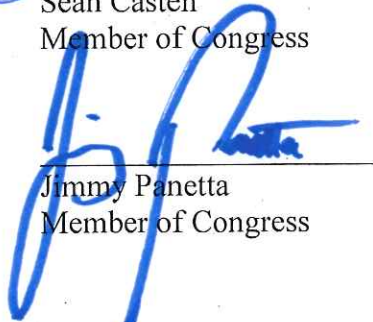

John Yarnuth
Member of Congress

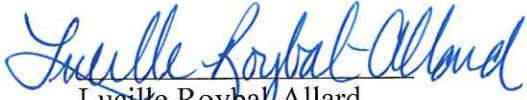

James P. McGovern
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Jamie Raskin
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Sean Casten
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Mark DeSaulnier
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Jimmy Panetta
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Lucille Roybal-Allard
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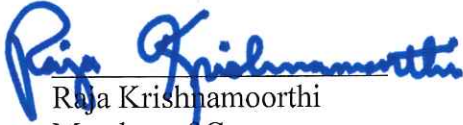
Debbie Mucarsel-Powell
Member of Congress



Adam B. Schiff
Member of Congress



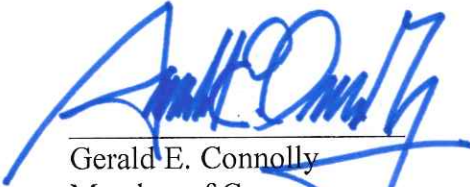
Antonio Delgado
Member of Congress



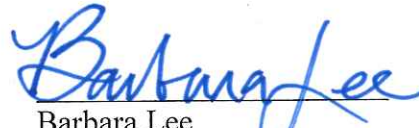
Raja Krishnamoorthi
Member of Congress



Ted W. Lieu
Member of Congress



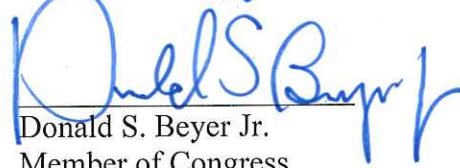
Gerald E. Connolly
Member of Congress



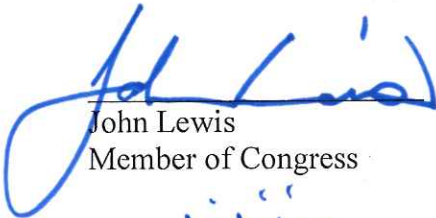
Barbara Lee
Member of Congress



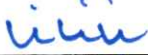
Jared Huffman
Member of Congress



Donald S. Beyer Jr.
Member of Congress



John Lewis
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Gregorio Kilili Camacho Sablan
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Lizzie Fletcher

Lizzie Fletcher
Member of Congress

Elissa Slotkin

Elissa Slotkin
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